



Bereaved Students, Schools and Communities

Strategies and Solutions for the Post-COVID Epidemic of Grief

A 4-part webinar series for School Nurses & School Mental Health Professionals

Session 1. Wednesday May 5, 2021

Biographical Sketches

Jesse Bassett, MDiv, BA

Jesse Bassett is the Director of Education for Good Grief, a nonprofit organization based in New Jersey. Good Grief's mission is to build resilience in children, strengthen families, and empower communities to grow from loss and adversity. As Director of Education, Jesse works with professionals from schools, healthcare, funeral homes, faith organizations, and community agencies to provide training and resources on grief and loss, childhood bereavement, and fostering resilience. Jesse holds a BA in Philosophy and a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary where he focused his studies on ethics and counseling.

Donna Gaffney, DNSc, PMHCNS-BC, FAAN

Dr. Donna Gaffney, a psychotherapist and former faculty member at Columbia University, has long addressed loss and grief in children's lives. She has counseled young people, families, and educators in the aftermath of individual tragedies and national disasters. As a member of the New Jersey Traumatic Loss Coalition, she collaborated with schools and communities after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and co-produced *Remembering September 11, A Guide for Schools*. Donna founded the *For Action Initiative*, a K-12 curriculum and website offering educational tools to support teachers and students in the aftermath of 9/11. While at Columbia University Donna created and administered the AAUW-funded trauma-focused bibliotherapy program, *Growing Heroines*, at one of New York City's largest elementary schools. Along with the Good Grief team, she is developing a discussion guide for the 2020 SXSW film festival documentary winner, *Beautiful Something Left Behind*. Donna holds master's degrees from Teachers College, Columbia University and Rutgers University and earned her doctorate at the University of Pennsylvania. She is a consultant for the New York Life Foundation and facilitates workshops for the Scholastic Arts and Writing Awards program. Donna has a private practice in the New York metropolitan area.