

Turning a Personal Tragedy Into a Triumph: Grief and Growth Among Suicide-Loss Survivors

Invited lecture · Yossi Levi-Belz

Prof. Yossi Levi-Belz is a clinical psychologist and clinical scientist, working at The Lior Tsfaty Center for Suicide and Mental Pain Studies, Ruppin Academic Center, Israel. He is interested in the psychological mechanisms that can help us understand and prevent suicide in different at-risk populations (veterans, soldiers, adolescents, ex-prisoners of war, medically serious suicide attempters, etc.). His primary research topic includes moral injury, suicidal ideation and behaviour, suicide-loss survivors, recovery and growth. Other research areas are interpersonal interaction in both real life and in therapy sessions, and attitudes of the public toward psychotherapy. He merges clinical, social, and research work and considers the integration of these three aspects as the central value of his work.

Abstract. Bereavement after suicide is an acute and painful phenomenon. The consequences of suicide on family members and close friends are broad, and include prolonged grief symptoms, guilt, shame, loneliness and much more. On the other hand, traumatic events may also be an engine for positive psychological changes and growth. In the upcoming lecture we will try to shed a light on the complex psychological journey of family members who have lost a loved one to suicide; we will delve deeper into a series of studies that present the deleterious consequences of suicide alongside the possibility of post-traumatic growth in the aftermath of suicide loss. In particular, we will focus on the series of longitudinal studies we conducted in Israel which highlights the factors that moderate the experiences of loss and may facilitate psychological changes and growth among suicide-loss survivors.