

Prof. Dr. Rita Rosner
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Workshop: Treatment of Prolonged Grief Disorder

Abnormal forms of grief, currently referred to as **complicated grief** or **prolonged grief disorder**, have been discussed extensively in recent years. While the diagnostic criteria are still debated, there is no doubt that prolonged grief is disabling and may require treatment. While DSM 5 neglects abnormal grief, ICD-11 is likely to include prolonged grief disorder. To date, few interventions have demonstrated efficacy.

Aim of this workshop is to enable therapists to differentiate between pathological and painful but normal grief reactions. Participants will learn about interviews and questionnaire focusing on prolonged grief disorder. Furthermore I will present an overview of the two interventions designed by us – the inpatient group therapy manual and the individual outpatient manual. Both treatments have been evaluated successfully. Both manualized treatments can roughly be described as consisting of three phases: In phase I. patients receive psychoeducation concerning their prolonged grief symptoms. As prolonged grief patients are often ambivalent about treatment, motivation needs to be addressed. In phase II. patients are exposed to their most distressing memories of the loss and its circumstances. Cognitive restructuring may be necessary if patients feel guilty or display other secondary emotions about the loss or going on with their lives. In phase III. patients aim towards transformation of the loss to enable change. While the individual manual is more integrative and includes interventions from solution focused therapy and gestalt therapy, the inpatient treatment is highly structured and employs also art therapy.

Structure of the workshop will include the first day focus on background information concerning courses of grief and diagnostics. We will also practice motivational strategies to promote change and psychoeducation about prolonged grief symptoms. During the second day we will practice various methods of exposure (written exposure, gestalt two chair dialogues etc) and cognitive restructuring. The workshop finishes with methods to deal with ways to transform and integrate the loss into the patients' current and future life.

Expected outcome for the audience: 1) To learn about the diagnosis of prolonged grief disorder and outcome research concerning grief treatments. 2) To gain knowledge about grief treatments and the necessary therapeutic techniques used. 3) To be able to apply exposure and cognitive restructuring in the context of prolonged grief disorder.

About the workshop presenter:

Prof. Dr. Rita Rosner currently holds the chair for Clinical and Biological Psychology at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany. She is licenced as a psychotherapist for adults as well as for children and adolescents. She received her training at Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich and the University of California at Santa Barbara.

Professor Rosner is past president of the German Speaking Society of Psychotraumatology (DeGPT) and serves currently on the Board of the European Society for Traumatic Stress Studies (ESTSS). She is also an associate editor for the European Journal of Psychotraumatology (EJPT).

Her current research focuses on the treatment of adolescents with PTSD after sexual and physical abuse, as well as on the treatment of children after various traumatic events. She has just finalized a number of studies on prolonged grief disorder. Her earlier studies dealt with the effects of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Selection of recent publication related to prolonged grief disorder:

Books

R Rossi, R., Hagl, M. 2015 *Anhaltende Trauerstörung. Manuale für die Einzel- und Gruppentherapie.*

Journals

Rosner, R., Bartl, H., Pfoh, G., Kotoučová, M. & Hagl, M. (in press). Efficacy of an integrative CBT for prolonged grief disorder: A long-term follow-up. *Journal of Affective Disorders.*

Rosner, R. (in press). Prolonged Grief Disorder: Setting the research agenda. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology.*

Unterhitzenberger, J. & Rosner, R. (in press). Trauer bei Kindern. Wann ist eine Psychotherapie indiziert? *Kindheit und Entwicklung.*

Unterhitzenberger, J. & Rosner, R. (in press). Preliminary evaluation of a prolonged grief questionnaire for adolescents. *Omega.*

Unterhitzenberger, J. & Rosner, R. (2014). Lessons from Writing Sessions: A School-Based Randomized Trial with Adolescent Orphans in Rwanda. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 5, 24917. [.doi.org/10.3402/ejpt.v5.24917](https://doi.org/10.3402/ejpt.v5.24917)

Hagl, M., Powell, S., Rosner, R. & Butollo, W. (2014). Dialogical exposure with traumatically bereaved Bosnian women: a randomized controlled trial. *Clinical Psychology and Psychotherapy*. doi: 10.1002/cpp.1921.

Rosner, R., Pfoh, G., Kotoučová, M., & Hagl, M. (2014). Efficacy of an outpatient treatment for prolonged grief disorder: A randomized controlled clinical trial. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 167, 56-63. doi: 10.1016/j.jad.2014.05.035.

Unterhitzenberger, J. & Rosner, R. (2014). Komplizierte Trauer, Depression und Posttraumatische Belastungsstörung. *Leidfaden*, 1, 8-11.

Rosner, R., Kotoučová, M., & Pfoh, G. (2011). Treatment of complicated grief. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 2:, 7995 - DOI: 10.3402/ejpt.v2i0.7995

- Rosner, R., Lumbeck, G., & Geissner, E. (2011). Evaluation of a group therapy intervention for comorbid complicated grief. *Psychotherapy Research, Volume 21 (2)*, 210-218. DOI: 10.1080/10503307.2010.545839
- Rosner, R., Kruse, J. & Hagl, M. (2010). A meta-analysis of interventions for bereaved children and adolescents. *Death Studies, 34*, 99-136.

Book Chapters

- Unterhitzenberger, J. & Rosner, R. (2013). Trauer und Komplizierte Trauer bei Kindern und Jugendlichen. In W. H. Honal, D. Graf & F. Knoll (Hrsg.), *Handbuch der Schulberatung* (S. 1-23). München: OLZOG-Verlag.
- Rosner, R. & Wagner, B. (2013). Komplizierte Trauer. In A. Maercker (Hrsg.), *Therapie der Posttraumatischen Belastungsstörungen* (S.469-486). Berlin: Springer.
- Rosner, R. (2012). Komplizierte Trauer: Definition und Behandlungsmöglichkeiten. In M. Müller, M. Schnegg & S. Brathuhn (Hrsg.), *Handbuch zur Begegnung mit und Begleitung von Trauer im palliativen und hospizlichen Kontext* (S. 91-95). Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht.
- Pfoh, G., Kortoucova, M. & Rosner, R. (2012). *Komplizierte Trauer: Ambulante Einzeltherapie*. In Festschrift für Willi Butollo. Tübingen: DGVT-Verlag.
- Rosner, R. & Wagner, B. (2011). Komplizierte Trauer. In G. Seidler, H.-J. Freyberger & A. Maercker (Hrsg.). *Handbuch der Psychotraumatologie* (220-230). Stuttgart: Schattauer.