

Psychiatry Grand Rounds

WCM Department of Psychiatry
Psychology CE Announcement
Faculty Council

“Giving Hope: Conversations with Children about Illness, Death and Loss.”

Elena Lister, MD

Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical Center
Senior Consulting Analyst for Grief at Columbia Psychoanalytic Center

INTERVIEWED BY

Susan Bostwick, MD, MBA

Executive Vice Chair, Administration & Faculty
Chief, Division General Academic Pediatrics
Associate Dean, Affiliations
Professor of Clinical Pediatrics

Wednesday, September 20th, 2023

11:00am – 12:30pm

<https://weillcornell.zoom.us/j/92812036154>

Meeting ID: 928 1203 6154

Password: 12345

1.5 CE credit available to WCM Department of Psychiatry full time and voluntary faculty Psychologists and Social Workers who sign in with their full name, attend the majority of the lecture and complete a survey which will be emailed following the completion of the lecture. Note the survey must be completed within 30 days of the lecture. Please contact Stephanie Harper at sth4009@med.cornell.edu for additional CE information

SPEAKER DISCLOSURE:

Drs. Lister and Bostwick have no relevant financial relationship(s) with ineligible companies to disclose and DO NOT INTEND to discuss off-label or investigational use of products or services.

Bio:

Elena Lister, MD, is Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Weill Cornell Medical Center and Senior Consulting Analyst for Grief at Columbia Psychoanalytic Center. She treats adults and children facing all life issues, specializes in grief, and is a frequently sought-out expert on dealing with loss in schools and organizations across the country. She presents at Grand Rounds about this topic in medical centers near and far. Dr Lister is published regularly in media such as the New York Times and the Washington Post writing or being interviewed about coping with loss. Her most recent book, coauthored with Michael Schwartzman PhD is called Giving Hope: Conversations with Children About Illness, Death and Loss. It was published by Random House in 2022. Dr. Lister is also the coauthor of I Will Remember You: A Guidebook Through Grief for Teens. Dr Lister's work in this area arises out of her experience of the illness and then death of her 6 year old daughter from leukemia 25 years ago. Since her daughter's death, she has devoted much of her professional life to helping people of all ages not feel alone facing illness and loss as well as other life challenges. A paper about that experience, published in the Journal of Pain and Symptom Management, is frequently used in medical schools and residencies nationwide to train physicians in how to talk with patients and families about dying. Dr Lister also gives the talk on this topic that is part of the Kravitts Foundation Retreat provided to the pediatric residents at our own medical center. She volunteers as a "Grief Chief" with children and with parents at Camp Erin, a non-profit sleep-away camp that is free for grieving children 6-17 years old.

Abstract:

How can we talk with children about such challenging topics as death as a concept and the illness or death of someone in their small or the larger world? We want to provide a sense of safety in what is realistically an unsafe world. While advocating for honesty and preventing secrets, Dr Lister provides us with ways to understand our own resistances to these conversations with children as well as why and how we should have those conversations anyway. Dr Lister will be interviewed discussing this by Dr Susan Bostwick MD, Professor of Clinical Pediatrics, Executive Vice Chair for Administration and Faculty in the Department of Pediatrics and Chief of the Division of General Academic Pediatrics at Weill Cornell Medicine. In addition, she is the Associate Dean for Affiliations at Weill Cornell.

Learning Objectives:

1. Describe the almost universal resistances to thinking and talking about death that exist within ourselves as well as provide challenges to talking with children about it.
2. Discuss the core best practices in how to have conversations with children about illness, dying and death.
3. Demonstrate understanding of the manifestations of children's grief and the differing approaches to helping them with various kinds of loss.

References:

1. Lister, E., MD, & Schwartzman, M., PhD. (2022). *Giving hope: Conversations with children about illness, death, and loss*. Penguin.
2. Dower, L., & Lister, E. (2001). *I will remember you: What to do when someone you love dies: A guidebook through grief for teens*. Scholastic Paperbacks.
3. Lister E. Liza's death: A personal recollection. *J Pain Symptom Manage*. 2001 Mar;21(3):243-9. doi: 10.1016/s0885-3924(00)00271-2. PMID: 11239744.
4. Staff, N. a. F. G. C. (2016). *When someone dies: A child-caregiver activity book by the National Alliance for Grieving Children*.
5. Mackesy, C. (2022). *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse: The animated story*. HarperOne.