

Holding Space Sessions

The term “Holding Space” is defined in Amy Wright Glenn’s book [Holding Space ~ On Loving, Dying, and Letting Go](#) as the practice of showing up with a compassionate presence to life as it arises, especially when it arises with difficulty and loss. Each Holding Space Consultant commits to do the following:

I am committed to using every moment of our time together to offer undivided support as you share stories, express emotions, and make meaning of what is going on for you right now. This means I will do a lot of listening. At times there may even be quality moments of silence ~ and I welcome you to breathe through those times knowing I hold them in peace.

I am committed to supporting you by holding space for your life transition, personal reflections, and/or mourning in accordance with your inner wisdom, values, pace, and process. You may be mourning many forms of loss ~ death, change of job status, the end of a relationship, loss of health, and difficult life transition. No matter the loss, I am committed to listen and care.

In any part of life, but especially in grief, we can all benefit from multiple circles of support. This consultation offers one approach to holding space for loss wherein I listen and affirm your inner knowing/wisdom. As you may be aware, there are many other approaches, including those that are more change-oriented in terms of offering therapeutic tools for transforming behaviors, addictions, and personal challenges. If you are interested in exploring additional approaches, I am happy to offer resources for you to consider.

I am committed to your safety and well-being. I will support you in seeking professional therapeutic guidance should I believe that the content of our conversations ~ or the nature of the difficulties you are experiencing ~ falls outside of my scope of practice. Seeking professional therapeutic support can be an additional helpful circle of support for many. Please note that while several of our trained consultants are licensed mental health professionals, holding space consultations are not professional therapeutic services and are not intended to replace professional therapeutic services. If you have questions about how holding space consultations are different from professional therapy, please let me know.

What I share ~ in terms of names and identifying features of yourself and those connected to your story ~ is held in confidence. The consultants of the Institute regularly meet with one another for continuing education and to enhance our skills in holding space during consultations. We have a deep reverence for confidentiality and go to great lengths to protect the privacy of those we serve even during these learning opportunities.

Wolfelt highlights how grief and mourning can feel like injuries and can be very difficult experiences, but they are very much normal parts of living human lives. Grief and its expression through mourning don’t make you wrong, sick, or ill. Your love and compassion for those you miss, or experiences/life circumstances you miss, are powerful forces. They will support you as you navigate your own unique journey in having the above needs met.

According to Dr. Alan Wolfelt ~ Director of the Center for Life & Loss Transition and whose work is also central to the Holding Space Consultant Training ~ grief is the inner experience of loss and mourning is the expression of this experience. Mourning can be done in private or in the company of trusted companions. Wolfelt has spent decades working with people through difficult change/death, everyone has six primary needs when we mourn our grief:

- *to acknowledge the reality of the loss experienced**
- *to feel the pain of this sorrow**
- *to remember the person/situation/events that are being missed**
- *to develop a new identity as the pain is, over time, reconciled or integrated.**
- *to search for meaning and find one’s own understanding of what happened and why**
- *to receive ongoing support through the grief journey of storytelling, emotional expression, and meaning making**

This session is designed to be the container to help you complete these tasks, unlike professional therapy which is change oriented.

