

Meet VNA Health Group's Bereavement Team



Erica Forsythe LSW, MSW – Bereavement Coordinator

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Erica Forsythe is a licensed social worker in New Jersey and New York. She also has an Advanced Certification as a Hospice and Palliative Social Worker. Erica was trained in Practice Focused Complicated Grief Therapy through Columbia University. Erica has over 10 years of experience in hospice that has prepared her to be an insightful and empathic bereavement counselor for VNAHG. Erica offers client-centered support through active listening, meaningful conversation, and education on the grief process. This allows for a safe environment to promote understanding, validation of feelings, and allow for the normalization of grief.



Sonia Illescas, LCSW, ACHP-SW – Bereavement Counselor and Psychotherapist

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Sonia Illescas is a bilingual (Spanish) Licensed Clinical Social Worker and Psychotherapist in New Jersey. She also holds an Advanced Certified Hospice and Palliative Care Certification. Sonia has 10 years of clinical experience in hospice and grief counseling. She draws on therapeutic modalities such as Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Motivational Interviewing and Complicated Grief Therapy. Forming close relationships is what Sonia cherishes most. Through these relationships she helps individuals recognize that grieving the loss of a loved one is both a process and a state. Creating a safe and supportive environment, validating emotions and demonstrating compassion and empathy gives clients hope to pass from a period of life-altering loss to one of relative stability. Sonia has a Bachelor's Degree in Professional Studies from Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA and a Masters in Social Work from Rutgers University, Newark, NJ.



Betty Jampel, LCSW – Bereavement Coordinator

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Betty Jampel is a licensed clinical social worker for over 30 years in New York, New Jersey and California. Prior to her recent role as a Bereavement Coordinator, Betty was a Hospice Social Worker with Barnabas/VNAHG for almost 10 years.

In her long career, Betty carries many certifications in holistic and complementary care, as a trauma, grief and transpersonal therapist. She has a commitment to provide patient and family-centered care to enable the dying process to be meaningful and compassionate for all.



Kaitlyn McNerny, LCSW, MSW- Bereavement Coordinator

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Kaitlyn McNerny is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker in New Jersey. She received her master's degree from Monmouth University. She has 5 years of hospice social work experience that prepared her for transitioning into the bereavement department. Prior to joining hospice, Kaitlyn worked in long term care and subacute helping with community resources, coping strategies and providing emotional support. These experiences have helped prepare Kaitlyn as a compassionate bereavement coordinator with an understanding in end of life as well as grief. She uses a strengths-based approach with active listening, normalization and validation of feelings through the grief journey.



Ria Fraser- Arnoczki, LSW, – Bereavement Coordinator

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Ria Fraser- Arnoczki is a licensed social worker in New Jersey. Erica has over 3 years of experience in hospice that has prepared her to be a supportive and empathic bereavement counselor for VNAHG. Ria offers a safe setting, providing non- judgmental support through neutral perspective, active listening, and education on the grief process. This allows for a safe environment to discuss uncomfortable emotions; enhance emotional resilience while encouraging self – compassion and self-care.

Ria has a Bachelor’s Degree in Child Study Education from St. Josephs College, Brooklyn, NY and a Masters in Social Work from Touro College, New York, NY.



Sharon Coyle-Saeed LSW, MSW, ACHP-SW, AGRS, RYT-200 (Trauma Informed)

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Sharon.coyle-saeed@vnahg.org

Sharon Coyle-Saeed is a licensed therapist in New Jersey with a graduate degree from the Rutgers School of Social Work with a focus on Health & Aging. She also is an Advanced Certified Hospice and Palliative Social Worker (NASW) and death doula(INELDA). Sharon is the Co-Author of Loss, Grief and Bereavement, a CEU-approved training manual for healthcare professionals. She especially focused on the chapters pertaining to suicide, homicide, children in grief, and cultural and religious competencies. Training/Certifications: Compassionate Bereavement Care (MISS Foundation), Grief Recovery (advanced level), Prolonged Grief Therapy (Columbia University School of Social Work), Thanatology (Open Center), Trauma Informed Yoga Teacher-200(Sakala), Functional Health Coach(Dr. Sears), Grief Movement(Paul Denniston), Clinical Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), CBT (Beck Institute), Mindfulness Meditation (MMTCP with Tara Brach/Jack Kornfield). She is a proud member of: National Association of Social Workers(NASW), American Psychological Association(APA), and Association for Death Education(ADEC)



Daniel Serpico, LCSW, ACHP-SW – Social Work Manager

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Dan is a Social Work Manager for VNAHG's hospice department and oversees the agency's bereavement services. He is dedicated to making a positive impact within the lives of individuals and families facing difficult challenges that arise in the dying process and in the aftermath of a loved one's passing. Since 2015, he has developed a working understanding of important skills and principles of grief and loss in his experience as a hospice social worker and bereavement coordinator. Dan received his master's degree from the Rutgers University School of Social Work and also completed Columbia University's Center for Practice Focused Complicated Grief. Dan manages the variety of supportive offerings and services that encompass VNAHG's overall bereavement program.