

One-day Workshop
on
**“Meaning, Spirituality and Post Traumatic Growth in Life-threatening
Illness and Bereavement”**

Trainer

Dr. Mary L. S. Vachon, PhD, RN
University of Toronto, Canada

16 June 2014 (Monday)
in Duke of Windsor Social Service Building

Life and death are natural and fundamental to human beings. A person might have spent one's whole life searching to understand the meaning and purpose of this unique life, or, by the end of the journey, be still afraid of marching to the mystery of death. Does connection to spirituality make a difference to one's life? What growth could have been experienced after a life-threatening episode due to illness to oneself or one's significant others?

As caregiving helping professionals, how shall we handle the life-threatening illnesses and deaths of our patients/ clients and accompany them to complete their life journeys in peace and dignity? How might we walk with them through the life-threatening illness and facilitate post traumatic growth in them and their families. Professional skills may not be sufficient without compassion. Let us explore the topic with Dr. Mary Vachon, a cancer survivor and psychotherapist, who will conduct this workshop in a first person perspective with professional view.

Personal Experience of Having Life-threatening Illness

When Dr. Mary Vachon was heading to speak in Hong Kong for the first time in 1996 about such subjects as “Breaking Bad News, Women with Cancer, Stress and Anticipatory Grief”, she was diagnosed with stage 4 Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma and given a 25% chance of survival. As a psychotherapist working with people with cancer and the bereaved for over twenty-five years at that time, the experience taught her a great deal.

Workshop Content

This workshop will explore the lessons that she learned and will draw on her continuing clinical experience and review research in the areas of meaning, spirituality and post traumatic growth in those facing life-threatening illness and bereavement as patients, family members and staff. Dr. Vachon writes extensively on occupational stress, burnout and compassion fatigue in professional caregivers to those with life-threatening illness. In this workshop she will also explore how we as caregivers can also experience post-traumatic growth in our work.

About the Trainer:

Mary Vachon, PhD, is a nurse, clinical sociologist, psychotherapist, educator, and cancer survivor. She is currently a Psychotherapist in Private Practice, Professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Adjunct Professor in the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto and Clinical Consultant at Wellspring (*A Lifeline to Cancer Support*).

Dr. Vachon is the author of “Occupational Stress in the Care of the Critically ill, Dying and Bereaved”. She has published over 170 scientific articles and book chapters and delivered over 1,600 lectures around the world on topics related to bereavement, occupational stress, life-threatening illness, palliative care, survivorship and spirituality.

