

**Porter Loring 11th Annual Spring Conference
“About Our Speaker – Dr. Janice Nadeau”**

Written by: Darwin Huartson

I believe we are in store for a real treat on Friday, May 12th, when Dr. Nadeau will be our guest speaker for the 11th Annual Porter Loring Spring Conference. She will share with us the significance of the family system and its impact on grief for both the individual and family, as we all seek new meaning in changed lives.

Within the last few years, we have heard much about the topic of meaning-making and grief. If you attended our Spring Conference several years ago, you probably remember our speaker Dr. Robert Niemeyer. He shared with us the significance of healing grief through telling and re-telling our life stories to seek new meaning, which helps us re-affirm and rebuild our lives in a world without our loved ones.



I share this back story to introduce our speaker for this year’s Spring Conference – Dr. Janice Nadeau from Minneapolis, Minnesota. Dr. Nadeau is a forerunner in the work on meaning- making and grief. In 1987 she received a four-year National Institute of Health grant to study the impact of loss on families. Her doctoral dissertation won the National Council on Family Relations and Sage Book Award, which resulted in her publication of “Families Making Sense of Death”. Dr. Nadeau has been active in the death, dying and bereavement field for 30 years in the roles of hospice nurse, college faculty, researcher, psychotherapist and author. Since 1994, she has been in full-time private practice.

Selected from Dr. Nadeau’s article “Families Making Sense of Death”, I would like to shares some formidable thoughts she wrote related to meaning-making and grief.

“The most common approach families used to make sense of their loss was telling their story of the death. Often in our haste to move people to a less painful place in their grieving, we do not take time to listen to their story. When we rush them, we are denying them one of their major methods of making sense of what happened.

“Another meaning-making strategy that families used was ‘coincidancing’, the term I choose to capture how families find meaning in coincidences that occur around the time of the death. Some said there was no such thing as coincidence. Things happen for a reason. Most families, however, did give coincidences meaning, and that helped them make sense of the loss of their loved one.

“Families make sense of the death by comparing the current death to other deaths. By comparing the death, they established themselves along a continuum of greater or less loss. People who lost older family members noticed news reports of children’s deaths, sometimes violent ones, and were grateful their loved ones had lived a long life and had done what they wanted to do before they died.

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“About Our Speaker – Dr. Janice Nadeau” Continued
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“By paying attention to the meaning constructed in their own words, we can enter the worlds of our grieving families, helping them feel heard. and understood. Then, they can construct meaning, which causes less distress.”

Early registration is **now open** and available **until April 21st**. Register online at porterloringevents.com or contact Darwin Huartson at dhuartson@porterloring.com. Seating will be limited, so prior registration is required to attend.

Review of the Porter Loring 2017 Spring Conference
“Grieving Families From The Inside Out”

Written by April Moxley, LMSW

As a hospice worker for 12 years, I am always wanting more knowledge on my passions – grief, loss and the bereaved. Having attended the majority of Porter Loring’s conferences, I have very high aspirations every year, as they always seem to provide a presenter that speaks to me both professionally and personally. This year, like all of the previous years, did not disappoint.

Our speaker, Dr. Janice Nadeau, was such an inspiration as she shared her topic, “Grieving Families from the Inside Out.” I found her to be down to earth, informative, humorous and very engaging. The visual aids she shared allowed attendees to see the change that occurs in a family when a loved one passes. When you can see something like that, it’s as though you’re able to feel it as well.

The scenarios Dr. Nadeau shared helped me feel more of what my patients and families may be experiencing. Her description and teaching on the family systems approach was empowering and relatable, making it a joy to participate in her presentation. As always, the Porter Loring staff was very kind, welcoming and professional, and I look forward to attending their next conference.

April Moxley, LMSW

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