

**Tragic Death and the Assault on Meaning:
Lessons from Bereaved Parents and African American Survivors of Homicide**

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Death may be the one universal human experience, but not all lives are touched by death and loss with equal force. Drawing on contemporary research on two tragically bereaved populations, parents who have lost children and African American families who have lost a loved one to homicide, we will explore the extent to which such losses pose profound threats to survivors' sense of justice, predictability and life purpose, and launch attempts to reaffirm or reconstruct a world of meaning that has been challenged by the death. Grief therapy, whether undertaken with individuals, families or communities, can then be seen as a context for facilitating meaning-making in the aftermath of traumatic bereavement, restoring some semblance of coherence and continuity to life narratives in the wake of devastating loss.