



## *Abstracts*

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# Living “Betwixt and Between”: Building the Capacities of Field Workers Who Support Refugee Minors Through Loss and Transformation

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Approximately 58.000 refugee and migrants currently live in Greece, faced with an uncertain future, due to the closing of European borders. Among them, 3.400 unaccompanied minors, mostly adolescents, live “betwixt and between” their home of origin (past), the ideal home of their aspired destination (future), and the “making-of-a-home” in Greece (present), while facing an uncertain future. These home representations affect their identify formation in conditions characterized by a prolonged liminality.

In my presentation I will first describe some of the challenges that unaccompanied refugee adolescents experience as a result of living “betwixt and between” worlds, which affect how they form and break attachments, cope with loss and trauma, and experience transformations. Then, I will refer to the challenges that Greek field workers encounter in their striving to support unaccompanied adolescents through loss and liminality. Special consideration will be given to a project, funded by Unicef, that seeks to build the capacities of 500 field workers and shelter managers. It is implemented by “Merimna” (a non profit organization for the care of bereaved children, families, and communities) and has three components: (a) training on loss, grief, trauma, resilience, stress management, and work culture, (b) supervision and support, and (c) the development and implementation of “good practices” on identified issues of concern.

Specialists in loss and bereavement have much to offer in a field affected by the rhetoric on the “refugee trauma”, yet have much to learn about loss in protracted refugee situations, involving repeated displacements, a permanent temporariness, and the experience of liminal states.