



Meet Agapé Therapist Zoi Saliga, MEd, LMFT



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My call to become a therapist began with a desire to do a job that helped other people heal emotionally. I applied to the Argyle Institute in Montreal, Canada to enroll in their program to

become a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist. The program only accepted 10 applicants a year, but amazingly, they made an exception and allowed me to join. I felt validated in God's call during my time there as He enabled me to complete the four year program in only two years. Since that time, God has continuously humbled me with the knowledge that I am His instrument to be used for the healing of others.

What is the best part of my job? What keeps me going and makes me so energized to see a heavy client load every week? It is being able to be present with my clients in session when it literally seems that a divine window opens and they suddenly understand what God wants to reveal to them and then begin to experience His healing. However, those moments for my clients of breakthrough, of healing, and revelation, come at a cost. There is hard work

and struggle involved, both for my client and for myself as a therapist, but at the end of their counseling process it also brings God's richest rewards. I should also emphasize that while therapy can be intense, climactic, and sometimes sorrowful, I also like to bring a sense of humor into our sessions and often find that I enjoy wonderful moments of laughter and joy with my clients .

My goal as a Christian therapist is to apply the best modern therapeutic practices, and yet remain pliant in the hands of our Savior, to be a tool for the "Great Physician". The merging of both secular knowledge with timeless and unchanging Biblical wisdom gives Christian therapists a decisive advantage in treating the whole individual.

At the cross, Jesus took care of *everything*, however, we need to apply that *everything* to our lives in order for each of us to reach our full potential in God. He called me into the field of therapy to work alongside Him to help my clients avail themselves of all that Jesus has done and will do for them as they continue to renew their minds in Christ and become further conformed to His likeness. I consider it the highest privilege to partner with my clients and journey with them on their path of sanctification.

CLINICAL STAFF

GALINA OLIVERA-CELDRAN, PHD, LPCS, LCAS
Executive Director/Therapist
Licensed Professional Counselor-Supervisor

JENNIFER H. DEAN, MA, LPCS
Licensed Professional Counselor-Supervisor

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Licensed Professional Counselor Associate

MISTY LAWRENCE, MA, LMFTA, LPCA
Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist Associate
Licensed Professional Counselor Associate

STEPHANIE ROOFNER, MA, LPCA
Licensed Professional Counselor Associate

KAITLYN FRASER, BA, BFA
Clinical Intern

LOCATIONS

MAIN OFFICE:

2124 Crown Centre Drive
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522 Moravian Lane
Charlotte, NC 28207

HUNTERSVILLE OFFICE:

14636 Reese Boulevard
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CONTACT INFORMATION

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Upcoming Events — please call 704-849-0144 for more information

ANNUAL FRIENDS OF AGAPE DINNER— Friday, October 27—6:30 to 8:30 pm, Speaker, Leslie Vernick, LCSW, *Living Up to Your Potential: Freedom to be Yourself*. Leslie is a popular speaker and author of seven books. In 2013, she won the American Association of Christian Counselor's *Caregiver of the Year Award*. **\$20 per person**

TRAINING SEMINAR FOR HELPING PROFESSIONALS—Friday, October 27 from 9 am to 12 noon, Speaker, Leslie Vernick, LCSW. Leslie's seminar is designed to train helping professionals on *Counseling Strategies for People in Emotionally Destructive Marriages—4 Stages of Healing*. Little Church on the Lane, Fellowship Hall, 522 Moravian Lane, Charlotte, NC 28207. **Cost \$25**

If you live long enough, you will experience loss...

loss of a job, a pet, a dream, your health, your youth, a relationship, your financial stability, your spouse or your child or your parent. Each loss we experience leaves a different mark on us, some very slight while others leave a lifelong mark. This article will focus briefly on healthy ways to grieve. It will also provide suggestions for those who want to know how to support a friend or loved one who is experiencing a time of grief and loss.

Our society can make grieving a loss very difficult. It seems like people expect a grieving person to “get over it” quickly like one gets over the flu. Or we even expect it of ourselves and try to escape the pain of loss by jumping into a new relationship, finding comfort in alcohol or drugs, denying the hurt...there are many ways we can find to dull the pain.

Initially, a loss throws you into a time of disorientation. Your world can feel as if it is spinning out of control. Author C.S. Lewis experienced the pain of losing his wife, Joy, to cancer. He wrote a book about that experience called “A Grief Observed”. He wrote “*No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear. I am not afraid, but the sensation is like being afraid. The same fluttering in the stomach, the same restlessness, the yawning. I keep on swallowing...There is an invisible blanket between the world and me. I find it hard to take in what anyone says.*”

There are confusing, conflicting and unpredictable emotions that accompany loss. As Christians, we may feel that strong emotions like anger or fear are “wrong” and if we feel those emotions, we are not “trusting the Lord.” Our heavenly Father understands the pain of loss and separation and gave us our emotions to help us heal from the loss. Anger is part of the grieving process. In Isaiah 53:3, Jesus is described as “*a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.*” David knew the pain of loss. In Psalm 31:9, he prays “*be gracious to me, O Lord, for I am in distress; my eye is wasted from grief; my soul and my body also.*” We don’t have to pretend that everything is fine! We may think thoughts like “I should be over this by now”—what’s wrong with me?” Grief has no predetermined time limits. If you are grieving a loss, you will move through several stages: acknowledging the loss, experiencing the pain, adjusting to the loss with new roles and responsibilities, and eventually acceptance of the loss.



Here are some guidelines for healthy grieving:

- Accept your grief
- Feel your feelings
- Don’t try to replace the loss immediately
- Talk with safe people about your feelings
- Take good care of yourself
- Involve yourself in moderate work and activities
- Take as much time as you need

Feeling isolated can be a hard part of the grieving process. It may be helpful to find a support group to help you feel less alone. **GriefShare** is offered by many churches. There are also support groups for people who have lost their jobs. Support groups are offered for a variety of health challenges. If you find you need further support, please contact one of the counselors at Agape. Each of us would consider it an honor to walk with you through the dark valley you are experiencing.

Lastly, how can you support a person in their grieving period? Words are usually not necessary, but your presence can speak volumes. Allow the person to talk about their loss. Allow them to cry without trying to “make them feel better”. Avoid phrases such as “he/she is in a better place”, “you can always have another child”, “that job wasn’t so great anyway”, “it’s just a cat!” Bearing witness to another’s pain and suffering is part of fulfilling the teaching from Paul in 2 Corinthians 1:3-5.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ.

2 Corinthians 1:3-5 NIV

There are many helpful books and articles on the subject of grief. Two that I have found helpful are “Recovering from the Losses in Life” by H. Norman Wright and “A Grief Observed” by C.S. Lewis.