

Sarah Clem, MSW

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EDUCATION

In Progress	University of Maryland, Baltimore, MD School of Social Work Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) Dissertation - Barriers to Death Rituals: A Phenomenological Study of Bereaved Lived Experiences Graduate School Certificate in Aging and Applied Thanatology
2017	Columbia University in the City of New York School of Social Work Master of Science in Social Work
2016	Colorado State University School of Social Work Bachelor of Social Work

AWARDS, GRANTS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

Awards and Fellowships

July 2026	AAUW American Fellow (\$25,000) American Association of University Women
October 2025	Spring 2025 Dean's Teaching Awards University of Maryland School of Social Work
October 2025	Spring & Summer 2025 Teaching Awards: Curator Award Office of Academic Affairs, University of Maryland School of Social Work
April 2025	Dr. Hannelore Wass Cross-Cultural Student Paper Award (\$1,000) <i>"A thematic synthesis of barriers to funeral ritual engagement and related outcomes for bereaved individuals and families"</i> 2025 Association for Death Education and Counseling Conference
October 2023	Social Work PhD Travel Fellowship (\$600) University of Maryland School of Social Work
February 2023	Conference Scholarship (\$175) Social Work Hospice and Palliative Care Network

November 2022	Global Scholar Award (\$2,300) The Center for Global Engagement at UMB
September 2022	Social Work PhD Travel Fellowship (\$600) University of Maryland School of Social Work
September 2022	Carol Schutz Travel Award (\$184) Emerging Scholar and Professional Organization (ESPO), Gerontological Society of America
May 2022	2021-2022 Outstanding Student Representative Award Graduate Student Association, University of Maryland, Baltimore
April 2022	Outstanding Research Poster Award <i>"Exploring congruency of death location preferences versus expectations: Findings from a national sample of the US general public"</i> 2022 Social Work Hospice and Palliative Care Network General Assembly
March 2022	Social Work PhD Travel Fellowship (\$600) University of Maryland School of Social Work
June 2021	Pre-Dissertation Fellowship (\$1,200) Association for Gerontology Education in Social Work
November 2020	Social Work PhD Travel Fellowship (\$600) University of Maryland School of Social Work

Funded Research Support

2026–2029	Investigator <i>"Pre-Service and In-Service Training for Adult Service Staff and Evaluation of Policy and Practice of Adult Services Programs"</i> (PI: Joan Davitt). \$738,000; MD Department of Human Services, Office of Adult Services.
2025–2027	Principal Investigator <i>"Barriers to Death Rituals: A Phenomenological Study of Bereaved Lived Experiences."</i> \$4,000; PhD Dissertation Grant, University of Maryland School of Social Work. \$25,000; Dissertation Fellowship, American Association of University Women.
2025–2026	Investigator <i>"Pre-Service and In-Service Training for Adult Service Staff and Evaluation of Policy and Practice of Adult Services Programs"</i> (PI: Joan Davitt). \$738,000; MD Department of Human Services, Office of Adult Services.
2023–2024	Investigator <i>"Maryland Caregiver Survey: Understanding the Needs and Challenges of Caregivers Living in Maryland"</i> (PI: Joan Davitt). \$1,000; Maryland Commission on Caregiving & Maryland Department of Human Services.

2023–2024	Investigator <i>“Maryland Caregiver Survey: Understanding the Needs and Challenges of Caregivers Living in Maryland”</i> (PI: Joan Davitt). \$1,000; Maryland Commission on Caregiving & Maryland Department of Human Services.
2021–2025	Investigator <i>“The Promise Project: Improving Early Childhood Teachers’ Wellbeing”</i> (PI: Celene Domitrovich; Co-PI: Brenda Jones Harden). \$2,000,000; Administration for Children and Families.
2021–2023	Transcriptionist <i>“The Role of Relationships for Adults Who Served Long Prison Sentences that Began in Childhood: A Mixed Methods Approach”</i> (PI: Nancy Franke). \$4,000; Grand Challenges Dissertation Award, University of Maryland School of Social Work.
2021–2023	Investigator <i>“Evaluation of the Quality Improvement Initiative to Improve Early Learning across Washington, DC”</i> (PI: Brenda Jones Harden). \$500,000; Bainum Family Foundation. \$500,000; Kellogg Foundation.

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed

- Mack, L. J. M., Shdaimah C. S., & **Clem, S. E.** (In Press). ‘I was anxious, I was nervous’: A qualitative exploration of dependency court perceptions and experiences across groups. *Journal of Forensic Social Work*.
- Franke, N. D., & **Clem, S. E.** (2026). “There was no crib notes on how to grieve”: Finding Grief Space During and After a Juvenile Life Prison Sentence. *OMEGA - Journal of Death and Dying*, 0(0), 1–22.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/00302228261462448>
- Davitt, J., Brown, J., Zhang, P., & **Clem, S. E.** (2026). Zooming Out: APS Worker Perspectives on Macro Challenges in Intake. *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 0(0), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01634372.2026.2667337>
- Clem, S. E.**, Becker, T. D., Sacco, P., & Cagle, J. G. (2025). Assessing prioritization of a good death across Brazil, Italy, Japan, and the United States: A psychometric evaluation. *Death Studies*, 0(0), 1–11.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2025.2551368>
- Clem, S. E.**, Zhang, P., & Cagle, J. G. (2024). Exploring congruency of death location preferences versus expectations: Findings from the general public in Brazil, Italy, Japan, and the U.S. *Illness, Crisis & Loss*, 33(3), 580-599. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10541373241262378>
- Becker, T. D., **Clem, S. E.**, Sacco, P., Cagle, J. G., Davitt, J. K., & Kusmaul, N. (2024). Further psychometric evaluation of the eight-item Hospice Philosophy Scale: Results from a national sample of interdisciplinary hospice clinicians. *Journal of Applied Gerontology*, 44(1), 70-82.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/07334648241265183>

Zhang, P., **Clem, S. E.**, Roderick, R., & Cagle, J. G. (2023). Exposure to a loved one's death and advanced care planning: Moderating effects of age. *American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine*, 41(7), 739-746. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10499091231188689>

Cagle, J. G., Zhang, P., & **Clem, S. E.** (2023) Estimating the impact of hospice care on key patient-family care outcomes using a nationwide U.S. probability sample. *The American Journal of Hospice & Palliative Care*, 41(9), 978-986. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10499091231218261>

Under Review

Clem, S. E. (2026). *Death rituals and meaning reconstruction: An autoethnographic exploration* [Revise and resubmit]. School of Social Work, University of Maryland, Baltimore.

Clem, S. E., & Camacho, D. (2026). *Loss and grief accumulation from U.S. migration: A meta-ethnography of Latino/a immigrant families* [Manuscript submitted for publication]. School of Social Work, University of Maryland, Baltimore.

Clem, S. E., L. J. M. Mack, & Shdaimah C. S. (2026). *"I gave my life up to make sure these kids got out the system": A qualitative exploration of cumulative losses among kinship caregivers* [Manuscript submitted for publication]. School of Social Work, University of Maryland, Baltimore.

Davitt, J., Zhang, P., **Clem, S. E.**, & Brown, J. (2026). *Intake challenges in APS: Hearing the perspective of case workers and supervisors* [Manuscript submitted for publication]. School of Social Work, University of Maryland, Baltimore.

Invited Book Chapter

Verdooner, E., & **Clem, S. E.** (2022). In-class breaks: The importance of taking a break during online classes and considerations for break activities. In M. Marquart, L. W. Marshall, R. Chung, & K. Garay (Eds.), *Designing Engaging and Interactive Synchronous Online Class Sessions: Using Adobe Connect to Maximize its Pedagogical Value*. EdTech Books. https://edtechbooks.org/designing_engaging_interactive_synchronous_online_classes/breaks_during_class

Invited Blog Post

Clem, S. E. (2026, April 21). Rethinking death rituals: How personalizing memorials helps us process grief. *Evermore*. <https://evermore.org/rethinking-death-rituals-how-personalizing-memorials-helps-us-process-grief>

PRESENTATIONS

Peer-Reviewed

Clem, S. E., Mack, L. J., & Shdaimah C. S. (2026, March 4-7). *Compounded loss: A qualitative exploration of kinship care providers* [Paper presentation]. 2026 Association for Death Education and Counseling Conference, Baltimore, MD, United States.

- Franke, N. D., & Clem, S. E. (2026, March 4-7). *Missing grief spaces for people sentenced to life in prison as children* [Paper presentation]. 2026 Association for Death Education and Counseling Conference, Baltimore, MD, United States.
- Clem, S. E., McCorvey, S., & Davitt, J. (2025, November 12-15). *Dual Caregivers: Stress, Physical Strain, and Self-Rated Health* [Poster presentation]. Gerontological Society of America's 2025 Annual Scientific Meeting, Boston, MA, United States.
- Clem, S. E. (2025, April 2-5). *Student paper award presentation: A thematic synthesis of barriers to funeral ritual engagement and related outcomes for bereaved individuals and families*. [Poster presentation]. 2025 Association for Death Education and Counseling Conference, Albuquerque, NM, United States.
- Mack, L.J. M., Schdaimah, C. S., Phillips, D. R., & Clem, S. E. (2025, January 15-19). *"I was anxious and nervous about what was going to happen": The role of expectations across stakeholder groups in child welfare dependency courts* [Paper presentation]. Society for Social Work and Research 29th Annual Conference, Seattle, WA, United States.
- Clem, S. E., Davitt, J., McCorvey, S., Becker, T. D., Eastman, J. & Sesek, G. (2024, November 13-16). *The fortitude factor for caregivers: Understanding the effect of employment and caregiving on caregiver wellbeing* [Poster presentation]. Gerontological Society of America's 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting, Seattle, WA, United States.
- Zhang, P., Clem, S. E., Guan, T., Becker, T. D., & Sacco, P. (2024, November 13-16). *Validation of modified sense of control scale among older cancer patients* [Poster presentation]. Gerontological Society of America's 2024 Annual Scientific Meeting, Seattle, WA, United States.
- Clem, S. E., & Davitt, J. (2024, April 11-13). *A thematic synthesis of barriers to funeral ritual engagement and related outcomes for bereaved individuals and families*. [Paper presentation]. 2024 Association for Death Education and Counseling Conference, Houston, TX, United States.
- Franke, N. D., Clem, S. E., & Becker, T. D. (2024, January 10-14). *"You can't really grieve them": Disenfranchised grief among people serving long prison sentences starting in childhood* [Poster presentation]. Society for Social Work and Research 28th Annual Conference, Washington DC, United States.
- Clem, S. E., Zhang, P., & Cagle, J. G. (2023, November 8-12). *Exploring congruency of death location preferences versus expectations: Findings from Brazil, Italy, Japan, and the U.S.* [Paper presentation]. Gerontological Society of America's 2023 Annual Scientific Meeting, Tampa, FL, United States.
- Becker, T. D., Clem, S. E., Sacco, P., Cagle, J. G., Davitt, J., Kusmal, N., & Cain, C. L. (2023, November 8-12). *Further evaluation of the Hospice Philosophy Scale: A differential item functioning analysis* [Poster presentation]. Gerontological Society of America's 2023 Annual Scientific Meeting, Tampa, FL, United States.
- Clem, S. E., Zhang, P., & Cagle, J. G. (2023, June 12-14) *Exploring congruency of death location preferences versus expectations: Findings from the general public in Japan* [Poster presentation]. International Association of Gerontology & Geriatrics Asia/Oceania Regional Congress 2023, Yokohama, Japan.
- Clem, S. E., & Becker, T. D. (2023, April 23-25). *Formal and informal advanced care planning in couples: Exploring differences in engagement between U.S.-born and foreign-born older adults* [Poster presentation]. The Social Work Hospice and Palliative Care 2023 General Assembly, Denver, CO, United States.

Rose, R., **Clem, S. E.**, & Smith, E. (2023, January 11-15). *Building & using directed acyclic graphs to inform causal analysis in social work research*. [Symposia presentation]. Society for Social Work and Research 27th Annual Conference, Phoenix, AZ, United States.

Rose, R., **Clem, S. E.**, & Smith, E. (2022, November 7-12). *DAGs for evaluation: An approach to identifying the sufficient set* [Poster presentation]. Evaluation 2022: The American Evaluation Association's Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA, United States.

Clem, S. E., & Becker, T. D. (2022, November 2-6). *Measuring a good death: An assessment across four countries* [Poster presentation]. Gerontological Society of America's 2022 Annual Scientific Meeting, Indianapolis, IN, United States.

Clem, S. E., Zhang, P., & Cagle, J. G. (2022, April 24–26). *Exploring congruency of death location preferences versus expectations: Findings from a national sample of the US general public* [Poster presentation]. The Social Work Hospice and Palliative Care Network 2022 General Assembly, Santa Fe, NM, United States.

Zhang, P., **Clem, S. E.**, & Cagle, J. G. (2022, April 24–26). *Prompting advance care planning: Exploring its association with death exposure* [Paper presentation]. The Social Work Hospice and Palliative Care Network 2022 General Assembly, Santa Fe, NM, United States.

Clem, S. E. (2022, April 7). *COVID-19 impact and health attitudes: The role of religion among racial and ethnic minority immigrants in the US* [Poster presentation]. Public Health Research at Maryland Ninth Annual Conference.

Raikes, H., Jones-Harden, B., Chazan-Cohen, R., Brown, D., Deming, J., Duncan, A., Esteraich, J., Escalante, E., Byrd, J., & **Clem, S. E.** (2020, November 30–December 3). *Impacts of Early Steps to School Success: A language-focused infant-toddler home visiting program in 19 US rural communities* [Poster Presentation]. National Research Conference on Early Childhood 2020: The Administration for Children and Families' National Research Conference on Early Childhood.

Invited

Clem, S. E. (2025, October 9). *Barriers to death rituals: A phenomenological dissertation study* [Oral presentation]. Qualitative Research Methods, Baltimore, MD, United States.

Davitt, J., **Clem, S. E.**, Barry-Dutro, E., & McCorvey, S. (2024, October 2). *Maryland Caregiver Survey 2023: Preliminary Results*. Maryland Commission on Caregiving, Baltimore, MD, United States.

Clem, S. E., Smith, J., Adesanya, I. (2023, May 9). *Oral, visual, & performative qualitative methods: Lessons from a peer study*. [Oral presentation]. UMSSW Office of the Associate Dean for Research and Qualitative Research Interest Group, Baltimore, MD, United States.

Rose, R., **Clem, S. E.**, & Smith, E. (2023, February 16). *Identifying the sufficient set in a DAG: The clock and grid approach* [Symposia presentation]. Lunch Time Research Seminar, Baltimore, MD, United States.

Clem, S. E., & Becker, T. D. (2022, October 20). *Measuring a good death: A comparison of four countries* [Poster presentation]. New Frontiers in Healthcare Management Life Sciences Seminar, Baltimore, MD, United States.

Clem, S. E., Zhang, P., & Cagle, J., G. (2022, October 20). *Exploring congruency of death location preferences versus expectations: Findings from a national sample of the US general public* [Poster presentation]. New Frontiers in Healthcare Management Life Sciences Seminar, Baltimore, MD, United States.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Graduate Research Assistantships

Sept 2023–Present	Faculty Supervisor: Joan K. Davitt, PhD, MSS, MLSP Responsibilities: Supported efforts towards tool development for statewide implementation. Cleaned and analyzed data from a large-scale survey of caregivers. Contribute to manuscript and conference presentation preparations.
Sept 2022–June 2023	Faculty Supervisor: David Camacho, PhD, MSW, MSG Responsibilities: Conducted a systematic literature search, coded qualitative data, and engaged in regular peer-debriefing.
Aug 2020–July 2022	Faculty Supervisor: Brenda Jones-Harden, PhD, MSW Responsibilities: Supported the implementation of the teacher well-being intervention. Engaged in various research activities such as developing protocols, conducting focus groups, running literature searches, and analyzing data. Supervised MSW students engaging in research-based work studies.

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Courses

July 2026	International Seminar: Social Work and Social Cohesion Co-instructor (BSW/MSW) Study Abroad; Enrollment: 24 Erfurt University of Applied Sciences, Germany
Aug 2025–Oct 2025	Foundation Social Work Practice II: Families and Groups Instructor (MSW) Online Asynchronous; Enrollment: 27 The School of Social Work at Boise State
Mar 2025–May 2025	Foundation of Research I Instructor (MSW) Online Asynchronous; Enrollment: 17 The School of Social Work at Boise State
Jan 2023–May 2025	Social Work Research Instructor (MSW) Online Synchronous; Enrollment: 25-30 University of Maryland School of Social Work

Jan 2021–May 2021	Social Work Research Teaching Assistant (MSW) Online Synchronous; Enrollment: 29 University of Maryland School of Social Work
Sep 2018–March 2020	Introduction to Statistics Instructor (MSW) In-person and Online Synchronous; Enrollment: 30-74 Columbia School of Social Work
Jan 2018–Sept 2018	Introduction to Statistics Lead Teaching Associate (MSW) Online Synchronous; Enrollment: 64-87 Columbia School of Social Work
Sept 2017–Oct 2017	Introduction to Statistics Teaching Associate (MSW) Online Asynchronous; Enrollment: 277 Columbia School of Social Work
<i>Guest Lectures</i>	
Nov 2025	Death Rituals and Grief Course: Theology and Philosophy of Death & Dying American Baptist College
Now 2025	Perspectives Toward After Death Course: Death, Dying, and Bereavement University of Alabama School of Social Work
Nov 2025	Death Ritual: An Overview Course: Death, Dying, and Bereavement University of Alabama School of Social Work
Nov 2023	End-of-life Topics: Death, Dying, and Grief Course: Human Behavior and the Social Environment University of Maryland School of Social Work
Nov 2022	Death, Dying, and Grief Course: Clinical Social Work with the Aging and their Families University of Maryland School of Social Work

PRACTICE EXPERIENCE

Jan 2020–July 2020	Strategic Initiatives Specialist Arab-American Family Support Center, Brooklyn, NY Supervisor: R. Nancy Albilal, MSW Responsibilities: Executed the de-implementation process of a ten-year grant program and implemented five new grant programs. Oversaw hiring process, managed staff training in evidence-based practice models, and developed new program processes.
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Jan 2019–Dec 2019	Preventive Program Supervisor Arab-American Family Support Center, Brooklyn, NY Supervisor: Arij Abdul-Halim, MHC Responsibilities: Provided supervision to MSW student interns and advised a team of case managers supporting immigrant and refugee families engaged in child welfare services. Developed and led focus groups and individual interviews to advance strategic funding proposals.
Nov 2017–Jan 2019	Counselor Advocate and After-school Program Director Arab-American Family Support Center, Brooklyn, NY Supervisor: Tyeast Fullerton Responsibilities: Developed and implemented programming and counseling support for three unique programs supporting refugee and immigrant youth, ranging from kindergarten to grade 12. Created an internal program manual to improve documentation, communication, budgeting, recruitment, and scheduling.
Sept 2016–April 2017	Constituent Case Manager Intern U.S. Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney, New York, NY Supervisor: Sarah Hague, MSW Responsibilities: Managed constituent casework relating to issues with immigrant and non-immigrant visas, including completion of letters of inquiry and letters of support. Represented Congresswoman Maloney at various events and meetings, including community board meetings, community task force meetings, and special events.
Jan 2016–May 2016	Social Work Intern WorkLife Partnership, Fort Collins, CO Supervisor: Brittany Robinson Responsibilities: Created and implemented training programs for client skill development and career progression. Maintained and provided critical revisions to the agency database, marketing materials, and monthly newsletter.

SERVICE

Professional

2025–Present	Student and New Professional Committee Member Association for Death Education and Counseling Responsibilities: Attended monthly meetings and supported planning efforts for the annual conference.
2025–Present	Senior Conference Volunteer Coordinator Society for Social Work and Research Responsibilities: Oversee a team of three Lead Volunteer Coordinators and five Deputy Volunteer Coordinators to support the coordination of over 220 student volunteers during the SSWR annual conference. Coordinate hiring efforts and lead team meetings to ensure the successful implementation of procedures.

- 2022–2025 **Lead Conference Volunteer Coordinator**
 Society for Social Work and Research
 Responsibilities: Coordinated volunteer scheduling for over 220 student volunteers, accommodating student presentation schedules, and evolving travel arrangements. Prepared training materials for student volunteers and monitored volunteer attendance throughout the conference.
- 2021–2022 **Deputy Conference Volunteer Coordinator**
 Society for Social Work and Research
 Responsibilities: Checked in volunteers for scheduled shifts and provided instructions and assignments to volunteers.

Journal and Conference Review

- 2023–Present Gerontological Society of America Conference Reviewer
- 2023–Present Death Studies Journal Reviewer
- 2022–Present Journal of Gerontological Social Work Reviewer

University of Maryland, Baltimore

- 2023–2024 **Alternate Representative**
Graduate Research Conference Subcommittee Member
 University of Maryland Graduate Student Association
 Responsibilities: Attended monthly Graduate Student Association meetings and reported updates as needed to the PhD Program Committee. Supported planning efforts for the Graduate Research Conference.
- 2022–2023 **Search Committee Member**
 Dean for the University of Maryland School of Nursing
 Responsibilities: Reviewed application materials, interviewed candidates, and provided feedback supporting decision-making for selected candidates.
- 2022–2023 **Secretary**
Graduate Research Conference Chair
 University of Maryland Graduate Student Association
 Responsibilities: Participated in Executive Board Meetings with university leadership, including UMB’s president, provost, and executive vice president. Oversaw the planning and coordination of UMB’s Graduate Research Conference and Advancement to Candidacy Ceremony, including the identification of sponsorship, vendors, and judges; scheduling and selection of 105 student presentations; and design of print materials.
- 2021–2022 **Primary Representative**
Graduate Research Conference Subcommittee Member
Professional Development Subcommittee Member
Graduate School Stipend Review Committee Member
 University of Maryland Graduate Student Association
 Responsibilities: Contributed in monthly Graduate Student Association and UMB stipend review meetings. Supported the planning of the Graduate Research Conference. Reviewed and scored applications for the Professional Development awards.

University of Maryland School of Social Work

2022–Present	Co-chair University of Maryland Qualitative Research Interest Group Responsibilities: Organized monthly peer-debrief meetings for students, staff, and faculty across the University System of Maryland. Established an autoethnography work group and coordinated twice-monthly meetings with students and faculty across multiple universities in the US and the UK. Provided qualitative consultation to PhD students and UMB staff to improve study design, data collection, analysis, and dissemination. Coordinated and facilitated multiple qualitative-focused presentations and trainings offered across each academic year. Advocated for the advancement of qualitative learning and support, leading to the development of an advanced qualitative elective course and the creation of a qualitative consultant position within the School of Social Work.
2021–2023	Representative University of Maryland School of Social Work PhD Program Committee Responsibilities: Attended monthly PhD Program Committee meetings and contributed student perspectives and insights to planning and decision-making. Reported meeting updates and decision-making to students.
2021–2022	Committee Member University of Maryland School of Social Work PhD Social Committee Responsibilities: Supported planning efforts for social gatherings of PhD students and faculty.

Community

2025	Death Cafe Event Coordinator and In-person Host Responsibilities: Planned and implemented a Death Cafe event for a low-income, rural community. Facilitated group discussions on topics related to dying, death, and bereavement for over 20 attendees.
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AFFILIATIONS

American Association of University Women	Association for the Study of Death and Society
Association for Death Education and Counseling	Gerontological Society of America
Association for Gerontology Education in Social Work	Society for Social Work and Research

TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION

2023	Richard Krueger: Fundamentals of Conducting Focus Group Interviews University of Maryland School of Social Work, Baltimore, MD
2019	Seminar in Field Instruction Certification NYU Silver School of Social Work