Sarah Clem, MSW

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EDUCATION

May 2027 (expected)	**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

HONORS, AWARDS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

July 2026	**AAUW American Dissertation Fellow ($25,000)** American Association of University Women
October 2025	**Spring 2025 Dean's Teaching Award** 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)** *"A thematic synthesis of barriers to funeral ritual engagement and related outcomes for bereaved individuals and families"* 2025 Association for Death Education and Counseling Conference
May 2022	**2021-2022 Outstanding Student Representative Award** Graduate Student Association, University of Maryland, Baltimore
April 2022	**Outstanding Research Poster Award** *"Exploring congruency of death location preferences versus expectations: Findings from a national sample of the US general public"* 2022 Social Work Hospice and Palliative Care Network General Assembly
June 2021	**Pre-Dissertation Fellowship ($1,200)** Association for Gerontology Education in Social Work

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*.

Clem, S. E., Becker, T. D., Sacco, P., & Cagle, J. G. (2026). Assessing prioritization of a good death across Brazil, Italy, Japan, and the United States: A psychometric evaluation. *Death Studies*, *50*(9), 1915–1925. https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2025.2551368

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., 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. *American Journal of Hospice and Palliative Medicine, 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].

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].

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].

Michalopoulos, L. M., Fang, W., **Clem, S. E.,** Kamugisha, S., Witola, G., Mubela, M., Mattocks, N., & Conway, A. (2026). *Climate change, mental health and mobility: A scoping review of migrant populations in low- and lower-middle-income settings*. [Manuscript submitted for publication].

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].

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., & Franke, N. D. (2027, January 20-24). *Funeral attendance during incarceration: Inequitable access and conditional humanity* [Poster presentation]. Society for Social Work and Research 31st Annual Conference, San Francisco, CA, United States.

Franke, N. D., **Clem, S. E.,** & Bright, C. L. (2027, January 20-24). *"When I had my baby, I had to be shackled": Pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood while serving life or long prison sentences beginning in childhood* [Paper presentation]. Society for Social Work and Research 31st Annual Conference, San Francisco, CA, United States.

Clem, S. E., & Camacho, D. (2026, November 4-7). *Loss accumulation among Latino immigrant families: A meta-ethnography* [Poster presentation]. Gerontological Society of America's 2026 Annual Scientific Meeting, National Harbor, MD, United States.

Giovanni, T., Hu, R., **Clem, S. E.**, Padilla, Y., & Taiwo-Hanna, T. (2026, October 22-25). *Rooted in resilience: Foregrounding diverse epistemologies through qualitative research education* [Panel Presentation]. 2027 Council on Social Work Education Conference, Atlanta, GA, United States.

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., Shdaimah, 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

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.

FUNDING

Funded Research Support

2026–2029 **Research Assistant**
"Pre-Service and In-Service Training for Adult Service Staff and Evaluation of Policy and Practice of Adult Services Programs" (PI: Joan Davitt).
$738,000; MD Department of Human Services, Office of Adult Services.

2025–2027 **Principal Investigator**
"Barriers to Death Rituals: A Phenomenological Study of Bereaved Lived Experiences."
$4,000; PhD Dissertation Grant, University of Maryland School of Social Work.
$25,000; Dissertation Fellowship, American Association of University Women.

2025–2026 **Research Assistant**
"Pre-Service and In-Service Training for Adult Service Staff and Evaluation of Policy and Practice of Adult Services Programs" (PI: Joan Davitt).
$738,000; MD Department of Human Services, Office of Adult Services.

2023–2024 **Research Assistant**
"Maryland Caregiver Survey: Understanding the Needs and Challenges of Caregivers Living in Maryland" (PI: Joan Davitt).
$1,000; Maryland Commission on Caregiving & Maryland Department of Human Services.

2023–2024 **Research Assistant**
"Maryland Caregiver Survey: Understanding the Needs and Challenges of Caregivers Living in Maryland" (PI: Joan Davitt).
$1,000; Maryland Commission on Caregiving & Maryland Department of Human Services.

2021–2025 **Research Assistant**
"The Promise Project: Improving Early Childhood Teachers' Wellbeing" (PI: Celene Domitrovich; Co-PI: Brenda Jones Harden).
$2,000,000; Administration for Children and Families.

2021–2023 **Transcriptionist**
"The Role of Relationships for Adults Who Served Long Prison Sentences that Began in Childhood: A Mixed Methods Approach" (PI: Nancy Franke).
$4,000; Grand Challenges Dissertation Award, University of Maryland School of Social Work.

2021–2023 **Research Assistant**
"Evaluation of the Quality Improvement Initiative to Improve Early Learning across Washington, DC" (PI: Brenda Jones Harden).
$500,000; Bainum Family Foundation.
$500,000; Kellogg Foundation.

Funded Travel Support

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)** Gerontological Society of America
March 2022	**Social Work PhD Travel Fellowship ($600)** University of Maryland School of Social Work
November 2020	**Social Work PhD Travel Fellowship ($600)** University of Maryland School of Social Work

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Graduate Research Assistantships

Sept 2023–Present	**Faculty Supervisor: Joan K. Davitt, PhD, MSS, MLSP** Responsibilities: Support efforts towards tool development for statewide implementation. Clean and analyze 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, engaged in regular peer debriefing, and prepared a manuscript for publication.
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

Guest Lectures

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
Oct 2025	**Barriers to Death Rituals: A Phenomenological Dissertation Study** Course: Qualitative Research Methods (PhD) University of Maryland 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

Arab-American Family Support Center

Jan 2020–July 2020 **Strategic Initiatives Specialist**
Responsibilities: Executed the de-implementation process of a ten-year grant program and implemented five new grant programs. Oversaw the hiring process, managed staff training in evidence-based practice models, and developed new program processes.

Jan 2019–Dec 2019 **Preventive Program Supervisor**
Responsibilities: Provided supervision to MSW student interns and 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 funding proposals.

Nov 2017–Jan 2019 **Counselor Advocate and After-school Program Director**
Responsibilities: Developed and implemented programming and counseling support for three unique programs supporting refugee and immigrant youth, ranging from kindergarten to grade 12.

U.S. Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney

Sept 2016–April 2017 **Constituent Case Manager Intern**
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.

WorkLife Partnership

Jan 2016–May 2016 **Social Work Intern**
Responsibilities: Created training programs for client skill development. Maintained and revised the agency database, marketing materials, and monthly newsletter.

SERVICE

Professional

Association for Death Education and Counseling

2025–Present **Student and New Professional Committee Member**
Responsibilities: Attended monthly meetings and supported planning efforts for the annual conference.

Society for Social Work and Research

2025–Present **Senior Conference Volunteer Coordinator**
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**
Responsibilities: Coordinated volunteer scheduling for over 220 student volunteers, coordinating 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**
Responsibilities: Checked in volunteers for scheduled shifts and provided instructions and assignments to volunteers.

Journal and Conference Review

2026–Present Ethics and Social Welfare Journal Reviewer

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

Graduate Student Association

2023–2024 **Alternate Representative**
Responsibilities: Attended monthly Graduate Student Association meetings and reported updates as needed to the PhD Program Committee.

2022–2023 **Secretary**
Responsibilities: Participated in Executive Board Meetings with university leadership, including UMB's president, provost, and executive vice president.

2021–2022 **Primary Representative**
Responsibilities: Contributed to the monthly Graduate Student Association meetings. Reviewed and scored applications for the Professional Development awards.

Graduate Research Conference

2023–2024 **Committee Member**
Responsibilities: Supported planning efforts for the Graduate Research Conference.

2022–2023 **Chair**
University of Maryland Graduate Student Association
Responsibilities: 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 **Committee Member**
University of Maryland Graduate Student Association
Responsibilities: Supported the planning of the Graduate Research Conference.

Graduate School Stipend Review Committee

2021–2022 **Committee Member**
Responsibilities: Contributed to UMB stipend review meetings and advocated for student financial needs.

Dean for the University of Maryland School of Nursing Search Committee

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.

University of Maryland School of Social Work

Qualitative Research Interest Group

2022–Present **Co-chair**
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, leading to the development of an advanced qualitative elective course and the creation of a qualitative consultant position within the School of Social Work.

PhD Program Committee

2021–2023 **Representative**
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.

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.

AFFILIATIONS

American Association of University Women

Association for Death Education and Counseling

Association for Gerontology Education in Social Work

Association for the Study of Death and Society

Gerontological Society of America

Society for Social Work and Research