

Bereavement & Loss



Supporting Professionals in Educational Settings:

- Helping to develop awareness and confidence
- Exploring aspects of bereavement & loss and identifying stages of grief
- Looking at effective management & support

Types of loss in the school setting:

- Most likely examples: death of a family member, long term illness leading to death, loss of a pet, divorce or separation or life transitions (school/friends/moving home)
- Death of an adult/member of staff or death of a child within the school community
- More complicated examples: suicide, sudden or violent death

“It is importantly to give time and space to grieve. Our task is to listen, not impose our agenda but allow the child to grieve in their own way”

The stages of grief:

- Shock/ Disbelief & Denial – avoidance, fear, confusion, blame, numbness.
- Anger – frustration, irritation, shame.
- Bargaining & guilt – desire to tell own story, reaching out to others, struggle to find meaning for event.
- Depression – overwhelmed, lack of energy, helplessness.
- Acceptance and Hope – exploring new options, putting a plan in place.

“Grief will seek its own pathway and it is unique to all individuals”

Delayed or complicated grief

Signs of this will include; chronic grief reaction, delayed reaction, exaggerated reaction or masked reaction.

A child experiencing such severe, chronic symptoms of a prolonged period of time needs the support of a counsellor or Arts Therapist.

Effective Management: The 'Gate Keeper's' Response

Selecting a trusted adult to support is key (stand-by.me.org)

Be proactive - approach them with an open warmth and on their terms.

Select a time and place when you have time to check in and offer a listening ear.

Assess their needs

Do they need (want) support? Do their family need feedback or support? Are they coping with the demands of school? Is there anything you could be doing in school to support? Make a plan.

What are the key dates? Is there a stage of bereavement that you can identify? What resources could be useful?

Useful resources & activities to use in school:

- 'My time' - regular time with an adult.
- A special book or box with photos and pictures of special objects.
- Time out card
- Create a boundaried safe space to express feelings
- Thinking about 'the grief ribbon'; a reminder that emotions & stages of grief can spiral in different directions and in no particular order.
- Be honest - the child needs to know correct information.

Useful Websites & Resources:

www.childbereavementuk.org

www.cruse.org.uk

<https://www.agespace.org/local/cambridgeshire/end-of-life/bereavement-support-services>

www.RD4U.org.uk a website where children and young people can visit and share experiences

www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

www.hopeagain.org.uk

<https://www.samaritans.org/>

- Winston's wishes resource: 'Beyond the Rough Rock' a useful resource for explaining suicide to a young person.
- Samaritans provide a step-by-step programme to support schools for death caused by suicide.

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