

Bereavement and Loss

Supporting professionals in educational settings:

- Develop Awareness and Confidence
- Identify Aspects of Bereavement and Loss
- Effective Management and Support



It is important 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.



There is no order to the stages, grief will seek its own pathway and is unique to all individuals



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, transitions (schools/friends) or Covid-19
- More complicated examples: suicide, sudden or violent death
- How it might affect the school community; death of an adult/member of staff or death of a child within the school community

The Stages of Grief

Kubler Ross suggests 5 stages and associated emotions

- **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

Delayed or Complicated Grief

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

A child experiencing such severe, chronic symptoms, over a prolonged period of time, needs the support of a counsellor or arts therapist.

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*Normalising loss:
Death is normal and a
part of life.
School life and its routines
can provide a sense of
normality & balance. They
can offer a sense of
security and continuity
It is important to give
time and space to grieve*



*Spiralling emotions –
recognising the feelings
behind the behaviours and
supporting a person to
find their way back to a
meaningful life; security,
empowerment, self-
esteem, meaning.*



Effective Management

The 'Gate Keepers' 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 a 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? If so, make a plan.
- What are the key dates?
- Is there a stage of bereavement you can identify?
- What resources could be useful?

Useful resources and activities to use in school

- 'My Time' Regular time with an adult
- A special book, or box of photos, and pictures of special objects
- Time Out Card
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 follow no particular order
- Be honest – the child needs to know the correct information

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Resources

For support, more tools and resources, please visit nessieined.co.uk

Winston's wishes resource: 'Beyond the Rough Rock' a useful resource for explaining suicide to a young person

Grief Counselling and Grief Therapy: A Handbook for the Mental Health

Practitioner J. William Worden

www.childbereavementuk.org

Samaritans

www.cruse.org.uk

www.RD4U.org.uk www.healthyyoungmindsinherts.org.uk

www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk www.hopeagain.org.uk

www.stand-by-me.org.uk

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