Growing Through Grief: Helping your school cope with loss & finding the courage to move forward

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Grief changes shape, but it never ends

My grieving experiences

My school’s story
Morgan’s Story

Morgan’s Journey: When something bad happens you have three choices...

Collaborating with school

Celebrating Morgan

What the school did right

What I wish the school would have done
The Kübler-Ross change curve

- **Denial**: Disbelief; looking for evidence that it isn’t true
- **Shock**: Surprise or shock at the event
- **Frustation**: Recognition that things are different; sometimes angry
- **Depression**: Low mood; lacking in energy
- **Decision**: Initial engagement with the new situation
- **Experiment**: Learning how to work in the new situation; feeling more positive
- **Integration**: Changes integrated; a renewed individual

Morale and competence along the y-axis and time along the x-axis.
Counseling Crisis Plan

Have a plan

1) Chain of command: know who needs the information and who is going to release information

2) What information can we share and how is the information going to be released?

3) How/where/when to deliver counseling services?

4) Contacting counselors and service providers: phone tree

5) Have a way to document who has seen for counseling services

6) Have your referral list updated and ready to distribute
Things to Consider...

- Administrators to have a generic statement prepared
- Be consistent
- Memorials at school
- Let students have input
- Inform staff as to how they should address students
Training Staff

http://grievingstudents.scholastic.com/

http://grievingstudents.scholastic.com/audiences/classroom-educators/

Communication Do’s

- be a good listener
- be honest with answers
- be patient
- share yourself
- offer positive reinforcement
- encourage expression of feelings
- acknowledge and be sensitive to religious and cultural differences
Communication Don’ts

- Use clichés and euphemisms
- Try to take the place of the deceased person
- Do all the talking
- Assume child is doing well just because he/she is not acting out
- Do other things while listening to a child
- Moralize by using ‘shoulds’ and ‘oughts’
- Tell a child how to feel
- Change subject when child expresses sad thoughts
- Measure or compare types of losses
- Act shocked at anything that is told to you
The Best Things to Say to Someone in Grief

1. I am so sorry for your loss.

2. I wish I had the right words, just know I care.

3. I don’t know how you feel, but I am here to help in any way I can.

4. You and your loved one will be in my thoughts.

5. My favorite memory of your loved one is…

6. I am always just a phone call away

7. Give a hug instead of saying something

8. We all need help at times like this, I am here for you

9. Find me if you need anything

10. Saying nothing, just be with the person

The Worst Things to Say to Someone in Grief

1. At least he/she lived a long life, many people die young

2. She/he is in a better place

3. She/he brought this on herself

4. There is a reason for everything

5. Aren’t you over him yet, he has been dead for a while now

6. You can have another child still

7. She/he was such a good person God wanted her/him to be with him

8. I know how you feel

9. She/he did what she/he came here to do and it was her time to go

10. Be strong
Resources

- Faculty and staff training
- Student Resources
- Parent/Family Supports
Elementary Resources

https://thegriefcenter.wordpress.com/2015/09/14/inside-out-grief-activity/


https://thegriefcenter.wordpress.com/page/3/

https://www.kickstarter.com/projects/1858495761/angel-birthdays-redefining-the-day-we-lose-a-loved


https://thegriefcenter.wordpress.com/2015/08/26/grief-self-exploration-house/

Secondary Resources

http://www.whatsyourgrief.com/grief-art-journal-activity-for-grievers/

https://thegriefcenter.wordpress.com/2014/01/29/grief-word-game/

https://kristinamarcelli.wordpress.com/2015/03/28/safe-place-pillow-case-project/

https://thegriefcenter.wordpress.com/2014/12/15/brb-be-right-back-grief-activity/

http://rectherapyideas.blogspot.com/2013/01/feelings-jenga.html


https://childrengrieve.org/sites/default/files/spiritweb/A%20Letter%20to%20You%20from%20Your%20Loved%20One.pdf
Resources Continued...


http://wvde.state.wv.us/counselors/group-lessons.html

http://www.themiddleschoolcounselor.com/search/label/Grief

School Crisis Plan Information:

When something bad happens
you have three choices
you can either let it define you
let it destroy you
or you can let it strengthen you