Coping Strategies: Techniques to promote resilience after the death of a student using the TEAR Model

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Learning Objectives

• To recognize the needs of students and teachers in the event of the death of a classmate/student.

• To explore the stages of grief and common grief responses.

• To gain an understanding of the TEAR Model used to facilitate resilience in students and teachers after the death of a student.
Why This Evolved

• In the past ten years, one south Texas school district experienced the death of more than 10 students.

• Based on the research, students, staff, and faculty shared feelings of helplessness and confusion.

• The research indicated a lack of, and a need/desire for, training in the area of crisis response.

• As a result, the TEAR Model was developed.
Principles of Grief

• Grief is a natural reaction to loss.
• Each student’s grief experience is unique.
• Every death is unique and therefore will be experienced by students in various ways.
  • Death from Chronic or Long term Illness
  • Accidental Death
  • Suicide
  • Homicide or Violent Death
Examples of Student Deaths

- Joshua: Stabbed in high school cafeteria, by fellow student
  
- Ernesto: Hit by truck on Halloween.
  
- Ashlyn: Died from Hypertrophic Cardiomyopathy
  
- Rebecca, 12 yrs old, jumped off of water tower after continuous cyberbullying
  
- Timothy died in car accident
Principles of Grief Continued

• The process is influenced by a multitude of factors:
  • The nature of the death.
  • The interpretation of the death.
  • The status of the relationship between the student and person who died.
  • The emotional and developmental stages of students.
  • The community's view of the death.
  • The support systems available to students (family, church, school, friends, counseling services, etc...).

• Grieving is a process; not something someone can “get over.”
Stages of Grief

• Shock/Denial
  “It’s not real, I can’t believe it, I just saw him/her!”

• Anger
  Anger directed at everyone, Anger inward

• Bargaining
  “If I could have one more day…”

• Depression/Sadness
  Overwhelming feelings

• Reconciliation/Acceptance
  Understanding, Healing, Returning to activities
Common Grief Responses

• Emotions
  • shock, anger, guilt, helplessness, confusion, fear, anxiousness, sadness, denial, agitation, stressed

• Physiological
  • heart palpitations, tightness in chest, sleep disturbances, appetite disturbances, restless activity, anxiety

• Thoughts
  • confusion, disbelief, inability to concentrate, preoccupation with events, concern about personal vulnerability and safety, forgetfulness

• Relational
  • clingy behaviors, isolation, aggressive behaviors, fighting/verbal outbursts
Resilience

“...can be defined as the capacity to spring back, rebound, successfully adapt in the face of adversity, and develop social and academic competence despite exposure to severe stress.”

~ Nan Henderson and Mike Milstein
Experiential Activities
**TAL**

**ALK**

**TALK ABOUT THE INDIVIDUAL**

- Tell me about him/her.
- Where did you meet him/her?
- What did he/she like? Dislike?
- What activities was he/she involved in?
- What was your relationship with the individual?

Your presence and communication are the most important factors in communicating safety and validating fears and emotions.
EXPRESS

EXPRESS FEELINGS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LOSS, SITUATION, EVENT

• Creative modalities:
  • Notes
  • Message in the bottle
  • Drawings
  • Music
  • Journaling

• Prompts:
  • How did you feel when your learned of the news?
  • What would you like to send to him/her?
  • What message would you like to hear from him/her?
  • Note to family, sharing a positive memory or detail about him/her.
ACTUALIZE

CREATE YOUR STORY IN SAND

• To frame a picture or story in your mind and creatively take a hands on approach to construct or actualize your intention.

• Create a positive scene portraying one of your favorite memories

• What is happening in your story?

• What would be the name of your story?

• Develop an inquiring mind. Be careful not to assume you understand their structure.

• Allow the student time enough time to create and narrate their story.
Pictures of Sandtray Stories
REFLECT

REFLECTIVE PRACTICES CAN CONTRIBUTE TO RESILIENCE

• How do you feel at this point?
• What are you needing?
• What are you expecting to happen now?
• How will things change?
• Is there anything your teachers, parents, or friends should know?
• What do you think about our time together?
Fostering Resilience In Students

• TEAR addresses loss and pain using creative modalities.

• TEAR supports the exploration of emotion and the readjustment to the learning environment.

• TEAR can help students discover ways to find new meanings after a traumatic experience.
References


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closing video