

Supporting Parents Through the Grief Process

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Parent Grief

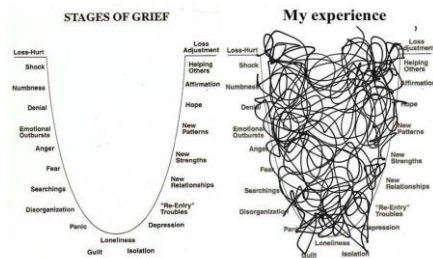
Initial Responses:

- Shock/numbness
- Denial/confusion

• Common Emotions

- Guilt and Remorse
- Anger
- Loneliness
- Blaming (self or others)
- Hopelessness

Acceptance



Video

Karen introduce Anastasia and background

Parent Grief

Physical Aspects of Grief

- Fatigue/malaise/aches
- Overeating/inability to eat
- Inability to sleep/ sleep too much
- Difficulty concentrating
- Anxiety

Differences within the family unit

- Use of social media
- Solitude vs. Company
- Outward vs. Inward
- Religion

Video

- Differences btwn husband and wife

How do we support?

Be Present and.....

Listen

Listen

LISTEN

Listen

Listen

Listen

Listen

Listen

Listen

How do we support?

Support in the initial stages:

- Maintain eye contact, show that you are listening with your body
- Physical closeness as is appropriate for the relationship - careful!!
- Be present without distraction
- Use the child's name
- Acknowledge and accept their feelings
- Don't try to fix
- Offer choices of specific ways you can help
- Attend visitation/funeral
- Provide resources

Supporting Parents

What **not** to Say or Do:

- They are in a better place, God doesn't give you more than you can handle, etc. (It's best to avoid religious assumptions unless the family initiates)
- I know how you feel.....
- You are so strong
- At least.....(nothing that follows at least is appropriate)
- Comfort in - dump out
- Avoid providing ideas of future normalization too early - Waves
- Don't push, pull, or drag - walk the journey along side them
- Remind parents they will likely grieve differently and to encourage communication.

Offering Resources

- Handout
- ele's place
- Now I lay me down to sleep
- Art for Charlie
- Child Death Helpline
- Molly Bear
- Burial Assistance

Children and Grief

- Shock/Numbness
- Denial
- Anger
- Sadness
- Anxiety
- Shame/Guilt
- Irrational thoughts
- Academic Problems (Older Children)
- Hiding their pain
- Magical thinking
- Intrusive thoughts
- regression

Supporting grieving children

What you can do to help:

- Provide factual, age appropriate explanation
- Reassure them it's not their fault
- Encourage questions and expressions of feelings
- Label your own feelings and their feelings
- Accept their responses without judgement
- Maintain routines and limits
- Be patient, don't expect grief to follow any time lines
- Children cannot hold intense feelings long
- Follow up with grief counseling
- Stay in touch with teachers and school counselors

Supporting grieving children

What is not helpful

- Using the words “went to sleep” or “lost”
- God or Jesus wanted them in Heaven
- Reuniting
- Lying about the cause of death
- Expecting all children to grieve the same, or to express their grief verbally
- Forcing them or forbidding them from attending the funeral
- Comparing them to deceased sibling
- Putting a time limit on their grief

Parent video

- Karen – lead discussion

Moving forward

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Factors that promote healing• Recognize Grief• Talking to others• Expression of feelings• Maintain healthy habits• seeking grief group• memorializing deceased• Favorite hobbies and interests• Religious support | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Factors that hinder healing• avoiding feelings• overworking• compulsive behavior• substance abuse• minimizing feelings |
|---|---|

Compassion Fatigue

“ A state experienced by those helping people in distress: it is an extreme state of tension and preoccupation with the suffering of those being helped to the degree this it is traumatizing for the helper.”

Dr. Charles Figley

Director of the Florida State University Traumatology Institute

Self Care - Any activity done with intension to improve or restore physical or mental health

- Professionally:
 - find support - accept it!
 - reflective supervision
 - minimize work load and other obligations - use some time off
 - Tell Coworkers what you need
- Personally:
 - Beyond bubble baths and candles - what do you do?
- Ideas:
 - yoga/reiki/meditation
 - purging emotions
 - happy list - successes, giggle file
 - therapy
 - pets
 - Pursue personal interests
 - visualization
 - Religion

Agency Protocol

1. Call Supervisor
2. Contacting other service providers
3. Information Packet
4. Reflective supervision - decision making
5. Follow up visits?
6. Play and Learn group decision making
7. Ongoing support - extenuating circumstances

Open conversation

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