

The cover features a central purple rectangular area. On either side, there are vertical grey bars. At the top of these grey bars, there are decorative curved lines in shades of blue and cyan. The text is centered within the purple area.

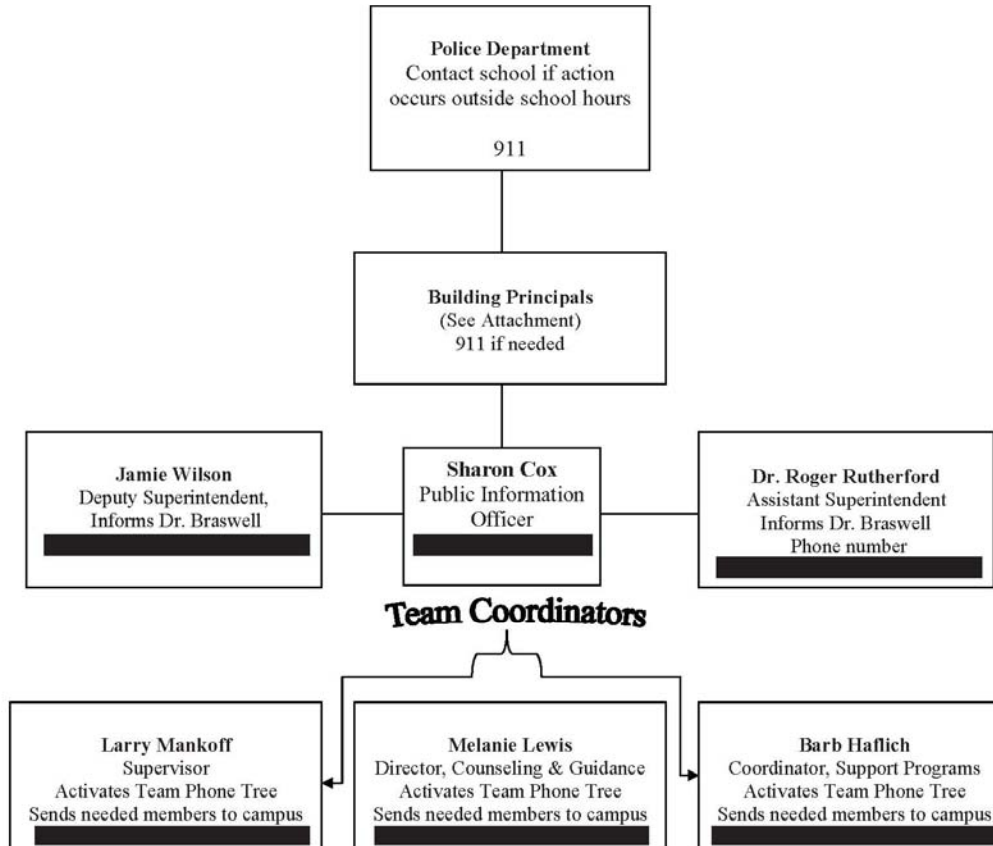
DENTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CAMPUS CRISIS & FLIGHT TEAM PROCEDURES

Department of Counseling Services

Revised for
2009 – 2010

**COUNSELOR RESPONSE TO CRISIS
CRISIS RESPONSE CHART**



DISTRICT CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM

The District Crisis Response Team is co-facilitated by **Larry Mankoff**, **Melanie Lewis** and **Barb Haflich**. Grade level co-coordinators are **Angela Gorton** (Woodrow Wilson), and **Marti Couch** (W.S. Ryan) for all elementary campuses, **Pat Schanz** (Navo) and **Bobbie Roberts** (McMath) for middle school campuses, and **Anne Scaggs** (Ryan H.S.) and **Amy Lawrence** (Guyer H.S.) for the high school campuses. In the event of a crisis and the absence of Larry, Melanie, or Barb, please contact the appropriate grade level coordinators above. For any given “event”, the “Team” will consist of the impacted campus’ designated “Flight Team” and if necessary, additional counselors will be recruited and mobilized at the request of the campus leadership. It is important to alert the Department of Counseling Services at the earliest opportunity whether mobilization is requested or not. Central Administration needs to anticipate calls from concerned parents or other community members.

THE COUNSELOR'S RESPONSE TO CRISIS STUDENT/ STAFF/ COMMUNITY

Few events in the life of a school are more painful or potentially more disruptive than a crisis event either on or off the campus. From the death or serious injury of a schoolmate or prominent adult to a hostage situation or natural disaster, all can have a major impact upon individual students and the school as a whole. Such traumatic events affect everyone to some degree. It is recognized that many students will be emotionally distressed over the event and may be unable to function as they normally do in the classroom. Events, which have an emotional impact, demand a supportive response from the family and community including the school.

Denton ISD has developed a proactive plan that prepares the school to respond crisis events. While this plan was originally designed in the 1980's to address catastrophic weather events, it has been expanded to address a wide variety of traumatic experiences, which can impact a student group. *Every campus acts as its own crisis team. This includes the campus administration, counselor(s), nurse and front office staff. When an event is assessed to be larger than the team can manage, the district Counseling Department is notified and the campus elected Flight Team may be contacted for additional support.*

Being familiar with this plan can help reduce the impact of the traumatic event and accelerate the normal recovery process. The primary goal of the intervention is to maximize the student's ability to return to an educational focus.

Levels of intervention are presented on a continuum. In some cases students can cope with the situation with minimal intervention. In other situations a major mobilization of all school resources may be required. It is at the discretion of the campus leaders to request the mobilization of the campus designated district Flight Teams. In any event, this plan provides a way to assess the needs of staff and students at all grade levels, and to assist in organizing building, district, family and community resources should they be needed.

For the web-based "Counselor Guide To Crisis Response" and to have access to the links throughout this document, sign into the district website, go to "Counseling Services" and you will see the link on the left panel. Note: links in this body are suggested options for response. Please differ district policy on campus.

CRISIS FLIGHT TEAM PROCEDURES

When there has been a tragic event such as a student death, the principal should obtain relevant information and immediately convene the campus and/or district crisis team. The campus/district crisis team will help assess the situation and develop a response plan.

A) Assess the anticipated impact on your campus

After reviewing the reported facts the crisis team determines the impact of this event on the campus/community in order to recommend the level of school intervention needed.

Student Impact

Consider the following factors to assess campus impact.

This list does not preclude other factors, nor are events equally weighted. Therefore, each situation or combination of factors may require a different **level of intervention**.

Greater impact:		Lesser impact:	
- Several students died	- Sudden/unexpected	- One student died	- Event anticipated
- Several student witnesses	- Some mystery attached to the event cause	- No witnesses	- Clear, unambiguous
- Several students injured	- High identification with student(s)	- No students injured	- Low identification
- Violent death	- In school or during	- Natural causes	- Out of school

Staff Impact

Some of the factors addressed in the student impact may be relevant to staff as well. For example, consider the number of students involved, how well known the students were to staff and whether the event happened in school or during a school-sponsored activity. Staff that was more directly involved is more likely to be in crisis themselves. In view of this, consider which staff may be in need of support and which staff may be able to offer support.

B) Assessment of building resources

It is recognized that each building will have a different level of staff performance in emotionally charged situations. Encourage a discussion about this and acknowledge concerns. The following are some questions to consider:

- Determine location of “Safe Rooms”
- To what extent have the crisis team members been impacted by the event?
- Would it be appropriate to involve other staff from the school on the team?
- Considering student and staff impact;
 - ❖ Are there enough trained personnel on campus to implement an agreed-upon intervention plan?
 - ❖ Is it appropriate to request the assistance of additional counselors/social workers to provide support services and to participate with the school building crisis team in performing other supportive tasks? Is it time to access the **Flight Team**?

C) Development and implementation of an intervention plan

1. Staff

Refer to www.u-46.org/sehs/cbgi/checklist.pdf

(See attachment) for suggested notification, direction and support of staff. Any combination of the following may be appropriate:

- a. No notification necessary.
- b. Written notification about the death/event.
- c. Written notification about the event including a request for the classroom teacher to make an announcement to students.
- d. Distribution of additional written materials. www.u-46.org/sehs/cbgi/memo_to_staff.pdf (see attachment)
- e. Emergency staff meeting with all staff before or after school for update & clarification of events.
- f. Small group discussion for information sharing, special directives and support.
- g. Individual staff concerns and needs addressed as necessary.

2. Students

Consider anticipated impact and resources within the building. Each situation should be individually considered, however, be aware that how the school handles the current situation may be seen as setting a precedent for the future. **Select a plan of action from the following:**

- a. No school response to the death/event.
- b. Notify faculty of the death/event encouraging them to maintain their normal routine and refer distressed students to a support area.
- c. Limit the announcement/intervention to a specific target group, e.g., the deceased’s peer group, team, club, etc.
- d. Notify faculty to announce and discuss the death/event to their classes. For more information refer to: www.u-46.org/sehs/cbgi/classroom_guide.pdf - (see attachment)
- e. Select a team member to attend the deceased student’s classes and assist the teacher in a classroom discussion.
- f. Select a staff member to assist with a classroom discussion, upon any teacher’s request.
- g. Identify staff to manage a support area for distressed students. For more information about intervention procedures refer to: www.u-46.org/sehs/cbgi/intervention_guidelines.pdf and: www.u-46.org/sehs/cbgi/intervention_guidelines_outline.pdf (Review on-line)

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Community Impact

Plan the most appropriate responses.

a. Identify a representative to the family of the deceased to:

- (1) Express condolences or concern.
- (2) Obtain information such as hospital updates, funeral arrangements, memorial donations etc.
- (3) Inquire about siblings or friends and any special concerns the family may have about them.
- (4) Return student belongings and class work to the family.
- (5) Provide follow up contact to identify any other concerns or address special requests.

b. With parents of other affected students:

- (1) Designate a person to respond to incoming phone calls, and or school office inquiries. (Provide a script if necessary.)
- (2) Provide supportive assistance on a one to one or small group basis with parents who have come to the school. www.u-46.org/sehs/cbgi/parent_support.pdf – (see attachment)
- (3) Send a letter, email or call parents of targeted student groups. Resource materials may need to be enclosed. www.u-46.org/sehs/cbgi/parent_handouts.pdf (Review on-line)
- (4) Send a letter home to all parents and, if indicated, enclose relevant resource materials.
- (5) Make referrals to community agencies for individuals, families or parent groups.

c. Media Contacts:

Sharon Cox, Public Information Officer work (369-0006) [REDACTED] or in her absence, a district designee will be responsive to media communications. Confusion is minimized when staff and students know they should deflect media inquiries to a designated person. Personal information about a student may NEVER be released to the public without parent permission.

d. Police and Community Agencies:

If the event involves a crime on school grounds, e.g., a shooting incident, the police have complete jurisdiction over the school as it becomes a crime scene.

D) Evaluation of the intervention plan

The crisis team should convene at the end of the day to share observations, get feedback, and evaluate:

1. The effectiveness of the building plan for the students, staff and community.
2. The continuation or modification of the plan for the next day.
3. The degree of support needed for crisis team members and other staff involved.
4. Debrief

POSTVENTION

Students

Consider continued support to affected individuals and small groups. Although the crisis itself may have subsided, it is important to keep in mind that significant dates and participation in events associated with the deceased may continue to be difficult for some students.

For more information refer to: www.u-46.org/sehs/cbgi/follow_up.pdf

Staff

It is acknowledged that the crisis intervention process is very stressful to the crisis team members. A “debriefing” or planned time for the sharing of thoughts and feelings has been shown to be beneficial in providing those involved with the necessary support and closure.

Assess the dimension of the crisis and determine if additional support is needed on the campus.

1. Assess, identify, and prepare self and support staff to respond to the needs of both the students and staff.
2. Determine locations for “safe rooms”, counseling sites or retreats for students and staff – assign support counselors to these sites
3. Priority is given to those who exhibit atypical behavior or emotions and are identified as “High Risk”. This may include siblings, friends, family members, AND staff. This may include students/staff on other campuses.
4. Make referrals for those students or staff members who the Team deems need extra attention and have not been identified previously.
5. Assist the School Crisis Team as needed, i.e., preparing letters and announcements, talking with classes or parents. * Materials on hand for Crisis
6. Debrief support staff at end of day/event (see attachment)
7. Enabling staff and students to return to day-to-day learning activities as soon as possible.

Your Name

Campus Name

FLIGHT TEAM

As you know, the dimension of a crisis event is entirely unpredictable. From the death of a child or staff person, to the witness of a traumatic scene, the infrastructure of a single campus can be shaken. Whether your building needs support as a result of the breadth of the crisis or perhaps you and/or your administration are too close to feel effective and need support yourself, it is important that you anticipate the need for depth to your response and support capabilities.

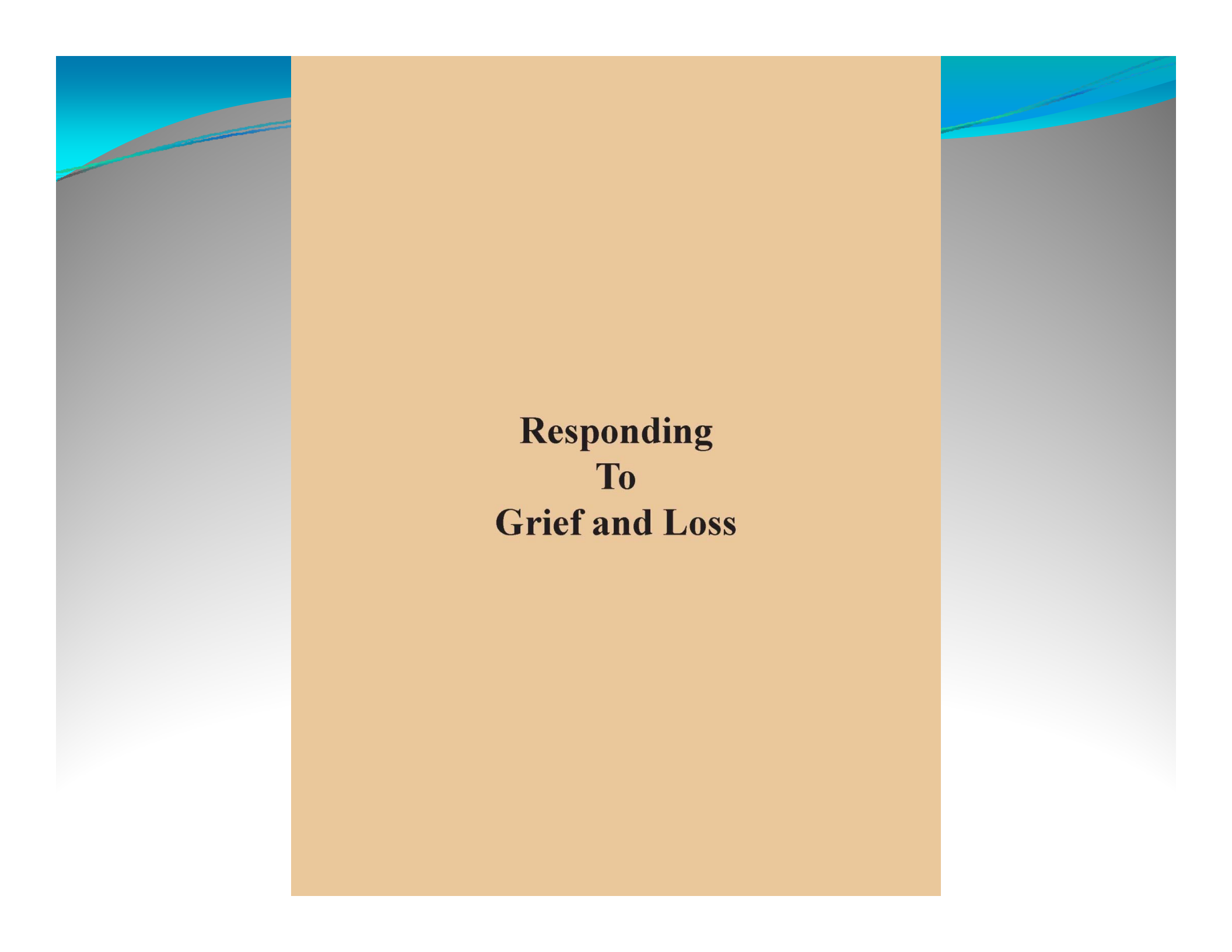
Starting from the principal and working your way through to the person answering the phones, consider this question: "Who do you want working beside you or in your place should the need arise?" "Who can you call upon to give you guidance, support, and direction?" This might be someone that you trust will help with difficult decisions or activities or perhaps someone you have worked with in the past and know they can see through the fog of a crisis.

Please discuss this with your campus leadership and complete the list below. Who do you want in the "wings" should you need someone to fall back on? Include a backup to that person as well. Complete this list with the emergency phone numbers for the Principal, Assistance Principal, Counselor and Secretary.

Jamie Wilson, Dr. Rutherford and the Counseling Department will keep a record of this on file in the event the Flight Team needs to be called during off hours. Consider as many names as possible and include all contact information (see your crisis folder for home & cell #s). Feel free to use the back of this page to add additional names.

Remember; any time, any day, it could be your turn to ask for support.

_____ Principal/s	_____ phone #	_____ Primary back-up
		_____ Secondary back-up
_____ Assistant Principal/s	_____ phone #	_____ Primary back-up
		_____ Secondary back-up
_____ Secretary/Receptionist	_____ phone #	_____ Primary back-up
		_____ Secondary back-up
_____ Counselor/s	_____ phone #	_____ Primary back-up
		_____ Secondary back-up
		_____ Additional back-up



**Responding
To
Grief and Loss**

Developmental Stages of Understanding Death

This is a general guideline in reference to the differences between ages and stages of how children perceive and understand death. Of course, maturity and differences in cognitive development will mean that some children are in a stage ahead or behind their chronological age. Remember, this is just a guideline.

UNDER 3 (pre-verbal)

- no language to attach to thoughts/experience - greatest need is for immediate bonding to new support

AGES 3-6 (magical thinking)

- May believe s/he caused the death by magic
- Associate death when concurrent events/place (G'ma died in hospital, so everyone who goes to the hospital will die)
- Experience grief in heavy but brief spurts
- Deny death as final process (Mom will come back for my birthday)
- Often forget person has died
- Fear loss and abandonment by remaining parent
- See death as change in state or gradual process (a leaf is "more dead" than a toaster)
- Usually have few fears about pain/distress for the deceased
- May not be open to reason or fact about cause of death - at this age they often "determine" facts for themselves
- See death as caused by external forces (retaliation, strife).

AGES 6-9 (concrete reasoning)

- Tend to personify death (death dropper, angel of death)
- Are superstitious, lots of ghost stories (chants, oaths).
- Associate death with non-movement (The dead can't talk, move, walk)
- Begin to explore concepts of death relative to family (Some day Mom will die)
- May experience sadness in anticipation of deaths that are not "rationally" imminent
- Believe it will happen to others, not themselves
- Are moving away from magical thinking toward grasping concepts of finality
- Around 6, may have fascination with death, killing
- Around 8, may have morbid fascination with death rituals, also dreams of death and resurrection
- May think material facts around death are funny

ADOLESCENCE

- Grow increasingly closer to adult views, experiences
- Can begin to be philosophical in viewing death
- May idealize the deceased, especially if a friend, sibling, or parent
- May experience conflict of needing to be growing independent (Appropriate for developmental stage) while needing family support during crisis/grief
- Have greatest fears about separation and non-existence.



Elementary School

Death of Parents or Siblings of Classmate

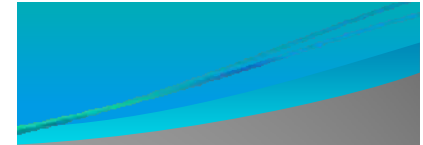
The school is usually informed of parent and sibling deaths from some source other than the bereaved child since the child will be absent from school for several days. Children who knew the parent or sibling of their classmate may react strongly to the death, but are often overlooked because of their indirect involvement.

Also frequently overlooked are those who did not know the deceased well, but had memorable interactions with them. For example, a young girl accidentally hit her friend's sister with a ball she was tossing and was unable to convince her that it was an accident. A week later, the girl who had been hit died unexpectedly, leaving the girl who hit her with extremely distressing feelings of guilt. Another child who was playfully teased by a classmate's older sibling, though he didn't know the sibling well, reacted strongly when the sibling died.

Elementary school children can feel very anxious after learning of a death because they are so dependent upon their own parents and siblings. They may worry about what would happen to them if it had been their own parent or sibling who died. For the first time, they may be aware of their own vulnerability to death. Teachers and other school professionals may hear students say "Children aren't supposed to die." Some children may become fearful, overly cautious, clumsy or aggressive.

If the death of the parent or sibling is upsetting to many of the students, a mental health professional may be called in to assist with the initial discussion about the death. The mental health professional might conduct a full classroom exercise including drawing pictures and writing stories or letters. The principles below are important to all classroom discussions about the death.

1. Tell the truth. Before telling the class, get as much information as possible from the family about how the parent or sibling died. Tell the class what happened in terms that are appropriate to the children's own cognitive and developmental levels. For example, children may be concerned about whether the person was in pain or why someone did not stop the death. If the person died in surgery, the professional and the teacher will need to be able to discuss the rarity of this occurrence and that the surgery itself did not cause the death (if that is true). Accurate information is central to the child's ability to analyze events and draw personally relevant conclusions.
2. Avoid giving unnecessary information that would only serve to distress or confuse the children avoid creating mental images of frightening or horrifying sights. Dispel any "Halloween-type" myths, which are common among elementary age children. Elementary age children think very concretely. Therefore, explain concretely what happened. Hearing the truth may help to stop rumors. Out of their own anxiety, children will need to talk about the death, and if they don't have accurate information, they may distort the truth. For example, a five-year-old boy whose father was killed by a gunshot was told by other children that his father was a "bad guy" because only "bad guys" get killed. Young children, especially, may need reassurance more than once that rumors are not true.
3. Allow for ventilation. After telling the children, set aside at least 30 minutes of time and offer them the opportunity to share their feelings about it. The statement, "I wonder what kind of feelings (bereaved child's name) is experiencing now," will draw out words like "sad" and "bad" for kindergarten through about the third grade. Older children will suggest more sophisticated adjectives. If they seem reluctant to talk about it, ask them to draw a picture or write a paragraph about how they think the bereaved child feels. Then ask some to read their paragraphs or explain their drawings. If time does not permit the sharing of all their work, assure the children that more time will be allowed later so that all have the opportunity to talk.
4. Affirm all expressions. Putting each adjective or phrase describing a feeling on the chalkboard may help the students feel that their expressions are acceptable. A student may say, "I'm glad it didn't happen





Teens & Grief

Feature Article:

What is it like for teenagers when someone close to them dies? How do they respond to the death of a parent, a sibling, a relative, a friend? In our work, we've learned that teens respond to adults who choose to be companions on the grief journey rather than direct it. We have also discovered that adult companions need to be aware of their own grief issues and journeys because their experiences and beliefs impact the way they relate to teens.

People often confuse "grieving" and "mourning." Grieving refers to the internal experience of the teen, whereas mourning is the public expression of the internal grief. Keep in mind that when a teen loses someone significant, he or she is grieving whether you can see it or not. Like adults, a teen experiences a broad range of emotions and physical reactions after someone dies. Adults are sometimes surprised to notice that teenagers grieve differently than they do. For example, the death of a close teen friend may evoke more intense grief than the death of a grandparent. Adults who don't expect this may minimize the impact of the death of a peer because they don't acknowledge or understand the significance of this friendship to the teen.

Six Basic Principles of Grief

1. Grieving is a natural reaction to a death.

Even though grieving is a natural reaction to death and other losses, it does not feel natural because it may be difficult to control the emotions, thoughts, or physical feelings associated with death. The sense of being out of control that is often a part of grief may overwhelm or frighten some teens. Helping teens accept the reality that they can grieve allows them to do their grief work and to progress in their grief journey.

2. Each grieving experience is unique.

Grieving is a different experience for each person. Teens grieve for different lengths of time and express a wide spectrum of emotions. While many theories and models of the grieving process provide a helpful framework, the path itself is individual, and often lonely. No book or grief therapist can predict or prescribe exactly what a teen will or should go through on the grief journey. Adults can best assist grieving teenagers by accompanying them on their journey in the role of listener and learner, and by allowing the teen to function as a teacher.

3. There are no "right" and "wrong" ways to grieve.

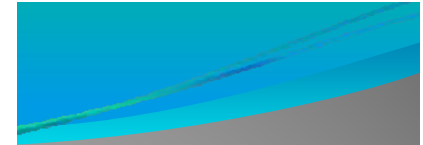
There is no correct way to grieve. Coping with a death does not follow a simple pattern or set of rules nor is it a course to be evaluated or graded. There are, however, "helpful" and "unhelpful" choices and behaviors associated with the grieving process. Some behaviors are constructive and encourage facing grief such as talking with trusted friends, journaling, creating art, and expressing emotion rather than holding it inside. Other grief responses are destructive and may cause long-term complications and consequences. These include alcohol and substance use, reckless sexual activity, antisocial behaviors, and withdrawal from social activities.

4. Every death is unique and is experienced differently.

The way teens grieve differs according to their personality and the particular relationship they had with the deceased. For many teens, peer relationships are primary. The death or loss of a boy/girlfriend may affect some teens more than the death of a sibling or grandparent. Within a family each person may mourn differently at different times. This can generate a great deal of tension and misunderstanding within the already-stressed family. Each person's responses to death should be honored as his or her way of coping in that moment. Keep in mind that responses may change from day to day or even from hour to hour.

5. The grieving process is influenced by many issues.

The impact of a death on a teen relates to a combination of factors, including:
- Available social support systems



Coping with the Death of a Colleague or Co Worker

When a co-worker or colleague dies, it can have a significant impact on those in the workplace. There is an element of "family" in many work groups. People get to know one another as they work side by side and share work and personal experiences. Sometimes co-workers and academic colleagues become close friends and spend time together outside of work. Others keep their relationship at work but develop a deep connection from working together. Some people do not develop close ties at work and reserve their intimate relationships to outside family and friends.

The effects of the loss of will be determined by many factors including but not limited to: the length of time working together, the nature of the relationship, the age of the deceased, the suddenness of the death, and other challenges that may be facing the work group and its staff and/or faculty at the time of the loss.

The Grieving Process

Depending on the nature of your relationship with the deceased, you may or may not go through a grieving process following his or her death. Grief is a universal, natural and normal response to significant loss of any kind. It is how we process and heal from an important loss. It can be a painful and tiring experience. Understanding the grieving experience and how best to cope with it can help you recover from grief of any kind.

Stages of Grief

Within the first few weeks to months after a death, you may find yourself riding on a roller coaster of shifting emotions. Most people go through these stages not in linear steps, but in unpredictable waves-moving through one stage to the next and sometimes shifting back. Some people will experience certain stages but not others. Here are some common, typical grief reactions:

Shock and Disbelief - the numbing and disorienting sense that the death has not really happened which can last from several hours to several days.

Anger - at the deceased, yourself, others and/or your God for what has happened.

Guilt - you may blame yourself for not doing or knowing more, or for not dealing with any "unfinished business" that you had with the deceased.

Sadness - you may experience a deep sense of loss and find yourself crying. There may be a tendency to withdraw or isolate yourself. You may lose interest in your usual activities, or feel helpless or hopeless. Other recent or past losses may come back to you.

Fear - there may be anxiety or panic; fears about the future. It may bring up your fears about your own sense of mortality and that of loved ones. "saying goodbye".

Honor the Deceased - Consider honoring the person(s) who died in an appropriate way, e.g. collecting money for a charity, creating a memorial book or bulletin board, sending a letter to the deceased's loved ones. Constructive actions, such as, donating blood or getting involved in volunteer organizations are helpful to some.

Be Resourceful- You may need some professional assistance if you find yourself not able to function as you would like as a result of the loss. Perhaps you have suffered other recent losses as well. Loss can trigger clinical depression which should be treated professionally.

Coping with the death of someone we know by suicide is an especially difficult challenge. Family members and loved ones should seriously consider getting expert professional mental health assistance as soon as possible. Talk to your campus counselor or contact the district's Department of Counseling Services for direction and support.

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Melanie Lewis, Director of Counseling Services 369-0065/ mlewis@dentonisd.org

Barb Haflich, Coordinator of Social Services 369-0599/ bhaflich@dentonisd.org



What To Expect:

People experience grief differently. You or a coworker who was particularly close to a person who died may feel depressed, absentminded, short tempered, or exhausted. These are all normal feelings.

Creating healthy memories is part of healing. Some people find talking about the deceased helps them manage their grief. Others keep to themselves. Respect the fact that others may feel the loss more or less strongly than you, or cope differently.

A death generates questions and fears about our own mortality. If a coworker dies, you may feel guilty or angry at the person, at life, or at the medical profession. It may cause you to question your own life. These are normal emotions.

Be aware of how you react to a deceased coworker's replacement. Your anger or disappointment at her performance, personality or work style may be less a function of the individual than your grief about the person they are replacing.

Get help if you have trouble coping with the loss of your coworker or if you find that your work is suffering. A lag in your performance could be a signal that this loss is affecting you more profoundly than you thought.

Resources and Readings

Your employment assistance program (EAP) may have suggestions on bereavement support groups.

Coping with the death of someone you know that is close to you is an especially difficult challenge. Family members and loved ones should seriously consider getting expert professional mental health assistance as soon as possible. Talk to your campus counselor or contact the district's Department of Counseling Services for direction and support.

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