

NOTE: A variety of lesson plan options are provided. Select ONE per week.

Week 3 Lesson Plans

Identifying & understanding feelings and behaviors associated with normal grief

“Feelings” Worksheet

Who: Kids, Teens, Groups

Materials: “Feelings” worksheet, markers, pens, dry erase board, and/or poster board

Why: : Provides an opportunity to express feelings related to their grief experience; normalize feelings associated with grief.

How to use: Provide participant(s) with a “feelings” worksheet. Ask participant(s) to look over the worksheet. Invite them to circle any feelings they are currently feeling. Use worksheet as a discussion starter for talking about feelings. Ask participant(s) to share which feelings they are currently feeling and when they have been feeling that way. Worksheet can also be helpful for families to check-in with their children.

Emotional Behavioral Cards

Who: Kids, Teens, Groups

Materials: Emotional Behavioral Cards, markers, pens

Why: Facilitates discussion of grief experiences; normalizes feelings associated with grief; broadens self-awareness regarding one’s personal grief process.

How to use: Explain to participants that the feelings and behaviors on each card are feelings and behaviors other kids and teens have said they experience.

Individual Session: Have participant sort the cards into two piles: one pile with those that they have experienced and a second pile with those that they have not. Counselor and participant can discuss behaviors and feelings.

Group: Pass the cards around and ask participant(s) to put a check mark on any card that describes a feeling or behavior they have experienced. If the cards are laminated, crayons work well for this (easy to clean and less messy than markers). After the cards have been seen by all participants, pass several out to each participant. Ask participants to read each of the cards in front of them and count the number of marks. Discuss behaviors and feelings as well as commonalities and differences.

Feelings Body

Who: Kids, Teens, Groups

Materials: Piece of paper for each participant; large piece of butcher paper (for variation); markers, colorful band aids.

Why: Provides an outlet to articulate the grief experience through artistic expression; provides an opportunity to understand the manifestations of feelings in the body.

How to use: This activity should follow the previous discussion/activities related to the identification of feelings and how/where they are experienced in one’s body. Discuss the physical manifestations of grief. Give a few examples, i.e., tired behind the eyes; nervous - butterflies in the stomach or sweaty palms, spaced out,

heart has been torn in two, etc. Have participants an outline of a body on their piece of paper. For some kids or groups, it may be better for the clinician to draw the body ahead of time. Ask participant(s) to choose a different color marker to represent each feeling. The feelings can be written or drawn on their body drawing. Provide an opportunity for participant(s) to share their body (the feelings they are feeling, where in the body they feel these feelings, symbols/pictures they drew to represent these feelings). Variation: If there is a large space, cut a big piece of butcher paper the height of each participant. Ask participant(s) to lie on the butcher paper and trace an outline of each participant's body. Participant(s) can then fill in their own body with feelings as above.

Inside/Outside Feelings: Paper Bag or Faces

Who: Kids, Teens, Groups

Materials: Paper Bag: Brown paper lunch bags; strips of colored paper; markers/pens; tape

Faces: Paper Plates, tongue depressors, markers, stapler

Why: Identify feelings they are experiencing during their grief process; affirms feelings as normal part of grief; provides education and understanding of how feelings may or may not be expressed even if they are felt.

How to use: Paper Bag (older kids and teens): Ask participant(s) to write down or draw a picture of all the feelings they have felt since their loved one died. Ask them to think about which feelings they express to others and explain these are called the outside feelings. Ask participant(s) to think about which feeling they do not express to others but keep on the inside and explain these are called inside feelings. Ask participant(s) to tape outside feelings to the outside of the paper bag and put inside feelings in the inside of the bag. Invite each participant to share their inside and outside feelings. Children can keep bags at home and change the location of feelings as the feelings that they share with others change.

Faces (younger kids): Put a tongue depressor between two paper plates. Staple the two paper plates together. Explain to participant(s) that we feel many feelings when someone in our life dies. Some of these feelings we chose to share with others and some we chose to keep to ourselves. Ask participant(s) to draw a picture of their face with the feelings that they show to others on one paper plate. Ask participant(s) to draw a picture of their face with the feelings that keep inside and do not let others see on the other plate. Invite participant(s) to share.

Feelings Concentration

Who: Kids, Teens, Groups

Materials: Feelings concentration cards (2 cards of each feeling).

Why: Educate about feelings; Provides opportunity to share feelings and memories.

How to use: Place cards face down on the table or floor. One participant at a time flips two cards over to try to find a match. When a match is identified, the participant who finds the feelings pair is given the opportunity to share a time when he or she experienced that feeling with their loved one or in their grief process. If the participant cannot identify a time when he/she experienced the feeling with their loved one, he/she can share anytime when he/she experienced that feeling. With younger children, you may want to use fewer pairs (ie 5 pairs)

How am I feeling today?

Who: Kids, Groups

Materials: Dog Faces Feeling Sheet

Why: Educate about feelings; Provides opportunity to identify and share feelings.

How to use: Using this sheet of dog faces, invite the student or group of students to pick one or two that represent how they are feeling in the moment. You can also ask them to move and make sounds that match how they are feeling. Example: You picked the sad dog because you feel sad. How would that sad dog move their body and what sounds would they make to show they are feeling sad?

Provided by: Dougy Center, Kindercare Learning Co & National Alliance for Children's Grief

I am Poem

Who: Kids, Groups

Materials: "I am.." sheet

Why: Build resiliency; Provides opportunity to identify and share feelings.

How to use: Have youth complete the I AM sheet to create a poem.

I wonder... I wish... I hope...

Who: Kids, Groups

Materials: "I wonder... I wish.. I hope..." sheet

Why: Build resiliency; Provides opportunity to identify and share feelings.

How to use: Have youth complete the sheet and share.

Safe Crossing Foundation

NAGC Hero Toolkit (National Alliance for Grieving Children)

Who: Kids, Groups (may be adapted for older youth)

Materials: Superhero Strength Builder Handout

Why: Building Resiliency.

How to use: Like a superhero, we all have special strengths inside of us, "powers" that we can call upon when we are grieving or feeling down. This "strength ball" will be a reminder of all of the strengths inside you and those that connect you to your special person.

NAGC Hero Toolkit (National Alliance for Grieving Children)

Who: Kids, Groups (may be adapted for older youth)

Materials: Superhero Cape Handout

Why: Building Resiliency.

How to use: It is normal to feel worried or more scared after someone special dies. You can be as confident facing these as a superhero is when facing their enemy! Be your own superhero by creating something to help fight off those worries and fears.

NAGC Hero Toolkit (National Alliance for Grieving Children)

Who: Kids, Groups (may be adapted for older youth)

Materials: Superhero Self-Esteem Shield Handout

Why: Building Resiliency.

How to use: This activity is designed to help a child identify their strengths, unique characteristics, and create a reminder about what makes them special and strong. This reminder can help them build a strong sense of empowerment during times of difficulty.

NAGC Hero Toolkit (National Alliance for Grieving Children)

Who: Kids, Groups (may be adapted for older youth)

Materials: My Life with a Superpower Handout

Why: Building Resiliency.

How to use: This activity encourages a person to consider their superpowers in dealing with their grief.

NAGC Hero Toolkit (National Alliance for Grieving Children)

Who: Kids, Groups (may be adapted for older youth)

Materials: The Mask Handout

Why: Building Resiliency.

How to use: The purpose of this activity is to provide children with a safe space to express their true emotions, while also helping them identify their underlying emotions and times when they may be hiding them.

NAGC Hero Toolkit (National Alliance for Grieving Children)

Who: Kids, Groups (may be adapted for older youth)

Materials: Mindfulness Hero Handout

Why: Building Resiliency.

How to use: In times of distress, sadness and/or anger, the participants can use this mindfulness activity to come back to the present moment.

NAGC Hero Toolkit (National Alliance for Grieving Children)

Who: Kids, Groups (may be adapted for older youth)

Materials: Building your Superpowers Handout

Why: Building Resiliency.

How to use: Heroes come in all shape and sizes and colors. This activity enables grieving children and youth to identify their own strengths and abilities that lie within.

What do you need?

Who: Kids, Teens, Groups

Materials: What do you need? Handout, paper, pens

Why: Telling the group what they need is an important exercise to do by the second of third meeting. This established respect for others and also enforces the importance of being responsible for our needs and how we communicate.

How to use:

When grieving, many people do not let others know what they need, because they feel they will be burdening them with their pain or they make the assumption that people should already know what they need without telling them. These two assumptions relieve the bereaved of the responsibility of letting others know what they need. When we make assumptions for others and see lack of communication as being their fault, we put ourselves in the role of “victim” and “victims” do not heal. A victim always assumes that someone else should know what to do or say or assumes that others just do not want to be bothered. The contrary is often more the reality. When we have a friend or family member who is grieving, sometimes we may not say or do anything simply because we are afraid of saying or doing the wrong thing. This is not done to hurt the bereaved, but instead, the intentions are to protect the bereaved. This is why it is so important, as the bereaved person, to let others know what you need.

IN THE GROUP SETTING, discuss the typical feelings that come up as we grieve, such as anger, sadness and confusion. After defining various feelings, focus on two, such as anger and sadness. Go around the group in a circle with each feeling and ask, as an example, “What is it you need from this group when you are feeling sad and tearful?” Each person will then answer. Sample responses might be, “When I am tearful, I really need people to let me alone.” “I probably would want to pass, or “When I am tearful, I need others to ask me questions to help me get in touch with what I am feeling.” If a person says they want to be left alone, a question the facilitator might ask is, “Is it all right to ask you later on, after the sadness is more in control, what is happening?” This is an important question as many people cannot verbalize their feelings when they are intense but do have a need to talk about them later. Telling the group what they need is an important exercise to do by the second or third meeting. This establishes respect for others and also enforces the importance of being responsible for our needs and how we communicate.

Provided by Linda Cunningham Copyright 1997/TAGNeeds 1-3