

Sea Glass Lesson Part 1

Who: Kids, Teens, Groups

Materials: Sharp pieces of broken glass, pieces of sea glass (wire) optional to make jewelry – Adapted Handout by Ellen Frankel (2014) *Bereavement Specialist*

Why: Provides an opportunity for participant(s) to identify and explore the concepts of: Will my grief ever stop hurting so much? Will I get over the pain? And to learn that the pain does change with time.

Read the following to the group:

Put a sharp broken piece of glass on display for the group to see (not touch).

Read the following:

When you break a glass on the kitchen floor, you must be careful when you go to clean it up. The glass is sharp—so very sharp – so as you pick it up, piece by piece, you have to go slowly, touch the glass cautiously, because even the slightest encounter with the edge can pierce your skin and you hurt and you bleed. The shards of the glass are harsh and the edges cut deeply.

Now imagine that those broken pieces of glass have been thrown in the ocean. They are at the mercy of the current and have to let go into the forces of nature. Some days the oceans roars with big forceful waves and the glass is tossed and churned and thrown by the rhythm of the tide. Yet just as the gentle ocean lulls the glass with its soothing melody, another storm hits and the glass is once again pushed against the force of currents, the force of the moon and the heavens. And yet again, at some point the ocean quiets, the flow is once again soft, the waves flow like the inhalation and exhalation of the breath, arriving at the shore, hugging the sand.

Imagine you are out walking along the seashore. It's a warm, sunny day and stop because sitting in front of you amongst the sand, shells and rocks is a piece of sea glass. You bend down and pick it up, amazed at your luck of finding it.

Instruction: If you have sea glass. Have each member select a piece of sea glass from a bowl you pass around.

Continue Reading:

Holding it in your hands you feel its smoothness and the places where the sea glass might have a slight ridge. You can rub it on all its sides, for no longer are there sharp edges. Instead, the edges have become solid, and smooth and you can hold it tightly in your hand without fear of getting cut. In fact, holding it in your hand feels good. We actively seek these brilliant pieces of sea glass precisely because they echo the beauty of survival, of resiliency, and of hope.

With tenderness and love you can hold this piece of sea glass and learn its unique features. Where once the edges of the glass were jagged and sharp, now the edges are even softly rounded, so that you can run a finger over them repeatedly, and not get cut. That is how grief can change...those are the edges of grief.

I think that is why so many people on the beach, children, and adults alike, feel that finding sea glass is like finding a treasure. When we hold a piece of sea glass, we hold in our hands what was once part of something broken, something that was sharp and painful to touch. When we hold it after its time of being housed in the ocean of life, it becomes stronger in the broken places and each small piece we find tells us that we too, are a treasure. We too can grow strong from our grief. Even in our most piercing and painful moments, the edges of grief are touching the forces of nature, the ebbs, and flows, and in its own time, there would be a grief that we could hold and treasure the love, the memories, the beauty and connection to our loved one.

