

**ADJUSTMENT PHASE FOR YOUTHS AND NEW CAREGIVERS/PARENTS**  
**PROJECT TALC (TEENS AND PARENTS LEARNING TO COMMUNICATE)**

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**SESSION 5: (JOINT - SPLIT) DEALING WITH LOSS AND GRIEF - PART II** (Day 3, Morning, 2 hours)

**OBJECTIVES:**

1. Youths and caregivers will be able to talk about the deceased parent.
2. Youths will begin to express feelings (anger, guilt) about the death of their parent.
3. Caregivers will identify the multiple losses they may face.
4. Caregivers will determine what children need and which behaviors help children whose parents have died.
5. Youths and caregivers will feel more comfortable grieving.

**RATIONALE:**

The sessions in the Adjustment Phase of the intervention are based on the assumptions that the best ways to help these youths after the death of their parent is to build a supportive family environment around them and to increase their skills in coping with feelings constructively. The focus of these three sessions over the next three Saturdays is dealing with loss and grief and strengthening the family.

This is the second session on loss and grief, and it assumes that some of the parents and caregivers who are members of the extended family may have their own grief reactions to contend with. The rationale is that actually grieving in the sessions desensitizes fears, creates a significant learning experience, presents models, and normalizes grief. Caregivers will deal with their own grief and - if they were close to the deceased parent, and also will learn how to help the adolescent. They will also identify the other kind of losses they may face.

Throughout these sessions concepts and materials are used which often originated in Sandler's Family Bereavement Program - Family Workshop and Family Adviser Program. Other sources include Earl Grollman (1990) Talking about death, Boston: Beacon; Grollman, E. (1993) Straight talk about death for teenagers, Boston: Beacon; Linn, E. (1986) I know how you feel, Incline Village, Nevada: The Publisher's Mark.

**SUMMARY OF EXERCISES:**

1. Introduce participants and mementos. Do a lottery. Check on how the week went. Have caregivers report on how they took care of themselves. Review 2 goals (sessions 3 &4). Use memento. (30 minutes)

#### YOUTHS ALONE

- 2a. Have youths meet separately and explore feelings about the death of their parent (anger, guilt). (35 minutes)
- 3a. Have youths meet separately and enter into a dialogue with the deceased parent through the empty chair technique. (20 minutes)
- 4a. Have youths respond to memory cards which stimulate recall of the deceased parent. (20 minutes)

#### CAREGIVERS/PARENTS ALONE

- 2b. Have caregivers/parents meet separately and discuss the multiple losses they may face. (30 minutes).
- 3b. Present to caregivers the needs of children who are grieving. (15 minutes)
- 4b. Review guidelines for helping children and youths who are grieving.. (15 minutes)
5. Briefly practice responding to children and younger adolescents around grief issues. (15 minutes)

#### YOUTHS AND CAREGIVERS TOGETHER

6. Set goals for the next session and show appreciation. (15 minutes)

#### MATERIALS:

"Thanks"  
Lottery tickets  
Lottery prize  
Feeling Thermometer Chart  
Newsprint and marking pens  
Goal Setting Chart  
Pencils  
Looking at Anger  
Looking at Guilt  
Memory Cards  
Handout "What you can do to help the children"

NOTES TO THE FACILITATORS: Text in **bold** letters tells you what the purpose of each exercise is. Text in CAPITAL letters tells you what to do. Text in small letters tells you what to say. Once you become familiar with what to say, please put it in your own words. Do not read aloud the text in small letters - make it

natural.

The times listed under the headings of each exercise are to help you keep on target and move the session along. Exercises may be lengthened or shortened at your discretion, as long as all the material is covered.

### FACILITATOR'S NOTES - REMINDERS AND POINTS TO MAKE

Exercise 1: What Happened Between Sessions?

(30 minutes)

**[The purposes of this session are to increase group cohesion, to encourage sharing of memories of the deceased, and to reinforce using what was learned in the session in the real-life environment. Attention is also paid to what caregivers are doing to provide support to themselves. Introductions, mementos, a lottery, reviewing the week, and checking on goals are the approaches used.]**

**#THE FACILITATOR BEGINS.**

Welcome back to our sessions on dealing with grief and loss when a parent dies of AIDS.

I am glad to see you here, on time, and ready to go.

Today we will explore feelings that arise over the death of your parent or, in the case of a caregiver, your daughter or other relative.

Everyone will explore emotionally and intellectually the loss involved.

Then youths will focus on dealing with feelings while caregivers look at what can be done to help.

To show my appreciation for being on time and for being ready to work on this tough situation, I want to start with a family lottery prize.

One person from your family can put your family's name on the ticket.

**#PASS OUT THE LOTTERY TICKETS. HAVE ONE FAMILY MEMBER WRITE THEIR FAMILY NAME ON THE TICKETS. COLLECT THEM, MIX THEM UP, DRAW A WINNER, AND GIVE OUT THE PRIZE.**

Before we go any further I want to pass out your "Thanks" for today.

Remember to give them when you like what someone said or did, their style, or their presence.

**#PASS OUT 20 "THANKS" TO EACH PERSON.**

At the end of the last session I asked you to bring a memento related to the person that died.

It could be a photo, tickets to some event you attended, a card or letter, a pressed flower, a ribbon - anything that brought back the memories and was special.

As we go around the room, please tell us your name, show us the memento that you brought, and tell us what it means to you.

If you forgot to bring a memento, tell us what reminds you of your dead mother or father or loved one when you hear it or see it or touch it or smell it or taste it.

**#GO AROUND THE ROOM, HAVING EACH PERSON GIVE HER OR HIS NAME, SHOW THE MEMENTO AND TALK ABOUT IT. GIVE OUT "THANKS" WHEN APPROPRIATE, SUCH AS DEEP FEELINGS PRESENTED OR TENDERNESS. MEMENTOS HAVE LOTS OF MEANING FOR PEOPLE, SO TAKE YOUR TIME.**

Thanks. That was very good.

How did the week go for you?

What was better for you?

What was worse for you?

**#ENCOURAGE SHARING. DO NOT GO AROUND THE ROOM AND ASK EVERYONE. LET THOSE PARTICIPANTS SPEAK WHO WANT TO. AFTER PEOPLE SPEAK, HOLD UP THE FEELING THERMOMETER AND ASK THEM HOW THEY FELT. COMMUNICATE VALUING THE EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS WHETHER THEY ARE POSITIVE FEELINGS OR NEGATIVE FEELINGS.**

Last week each of you made a commitment to try to achieve goals that you set.

Last time you set two goals, one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

Now I would like to check in with you about those goals. The morning goal was a between-session goal and was to do one thing related to your feelings of loss.

The afternoon goal for youths was a short-term goal about planning for your future and what you have to do in order to be successful and satisfied in the future.

The afternoon goal for caregivers was a between-session goal aimed at better understanding the young person you're caring for.

Remember, what were the characteristics of a good goal?

**#HOLD UP THE GOAL SETTING CHART. [USE THE PRE-PRINTED GRAPHIC.]**

**A PERSONAL GOAL SHOULD:**

#Be Realistic

#Be Clear

#Not Be Too Easy or Too Hard

#Easy to Recognize When It's Been Accomplished

The goal was to be realistic, clear, not too much or too little, and easy to see if completed.

I want to go around the room and have everyone talk about how meeting his or her goal went.

Look at your goal card.

That's where it tells you what the goal was.

**#GO AROUND THE ROOM AND HAVE EVERYONE REPORT ON GOAL PROGRESS. FAMILIES CAN REPORT TOGETHER. REFER TO THE GOAL SUMMARY SHEET. CHECK OUT IF THE GOAL MET THE CRITERIA. SEE WHAT BARRIERS AROSE. HAVE THE GROUP HELP BRAINSTORM SOLUTIONS TO OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS.**

Thank you for sharing your work on the goals you chose.

Each week we will end the session setting a goal to achieve between sessions.

We pay attention to goals for two reasons.

First, it makes sure that what we learn in the session gets applied in real life.

Trying it out in real life increases the possibility that you will use it and that it will be helpful.

Second, taking active steps in the real world to identify and express your grief feelings and to remember the real person who died - both the pluses and minuses - moves the process along.

Are there any questions?

**#ANSWER QUESTIONS.**

Now we are going to move into separate groups - one for youths and one for caregivers.

## YOUTHS ALONE

### Exercise 2a: What Am I Feeling (guilt, anger)? (35 minutes)

**[The purposes of this exercise are for youths to identify how they are feeling and to express those feelings. Assessment forms and small group sharing are used. NOTE: YOUTHS AND CAREGIVERS SHOULD BE IN SEPARATE ROOMS]**

When a parent dies, lots of strong feelings are stirred up, and they may be hard to deal with.

We already have heard that the feelings you have when you are grieving are OK.

Last time we talked about sadness.

Sadness is only one of the many feelings that young people have after losing a parent.

Today we are going to talk about two other feelings that most young people experience after a loss: guilt and anger.

We are going to spend some time letting you find out what your feelings are.

To start with I want you to explore by yourself.

The first feeling is guilt.

Read "Looking at Guilt" and indicate how you feel.

**#HAND OUT "LOOKING AT GUILT AND PENCILS. ALLOW THREE MINUTES TO COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE.**

### LOOKING AT GUILT

Guilt is one of the most uncomfortable feelings we can have. When we think that we did something bad or something that caused a bad thing to happen, we feel terrible. There are also times we feel bad because we

didn't do something we wished we had done. When someone special dies, we think about things we wish we had done or said.

Sometimes we even wonder if we did something that led to the person's death. These thoughts lead to feelings of guilt and regret. We need people who are willing to listen to us talk about these things so that we can feel better about ourselves.

Instructions: Check the statements that best fit you.

1. I feel guilty since the death of my mother (or father)..... most of the time\_\_\_, some of the time\_\_\_, almost never\_\_\_.
2. When I do feel guilty, it is.....terrible\_\_\_, not so bad\_\_\_, just a tiny amount\_\_\_.
3. When I say that I feel guilty, people..... listen to me\_\_\_, ignore me\_\_\_, tell me not to feel that way\_\_\_.
4. When I feel guilty,....I know it is normal\_\_\_, I think it is wrong\_\_\_
5. When I feel guilty,... I let myself talk about it\_\_\_, I try not to think about it\_\_\_
6. There are things I did a long time ago that I feel guilty about again. yes\_\_\_ no\_\_\_
7. I feel guilty because\_\_\_\_\_

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THE END

We are going to meet in small groups and, to the extent you are comfortable, share what has been making you feel guilty recently.

**#HAVE YOUTHS MEET IN TRIADS AND SHARE THEIR FEELINGS OF GUILT.**

There is one more feeling I would like you to check out.

That is the feeling of anger.

I will give you another questionnaire called "Looking At Anger."

Please read it and indicate where you are in terms of feeling anger.

#HAND OUT "LOOKING AT ANGER" AND PENCILS. ALLOW  
THREE MINUTES TO COMPLETE THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

### LOOKING AT ANGER

Anger is a normal feeling that all people have at times. It helps us know that something is wrong, and it helps people know what problems they need to work out together. It is important to let people know when we are angry. We are not bad when we are angry. We are just trying to let people who matter to us know that something does not seem right.

When someone who is special to us dies, we may feel very, very angry. Something very important is definitely not right, and we want people to know how we feel about that. Sometimes the anger feels really bad because even though it shows what is wrong (like someone special has died) it doesn't help solve the problem. (It can't bring the person back to life.) Still it is normal to be angry and often helps us feel a little better to let people know we are angry.

Instructions: Check the statements that best fit you.

1. I feel angry after the death of my mother (father).....most of the time\_\_\_, some of the time\_\_\_, almost never\_\_\_
2. When I do feel anger, it is..... very strong\_\_\_, a medium amount\_\_\_, not very much\_\_\_
3. When I feel angry, people.....listen to me\_\_\_, ignore me\_\_\_, tell me not to be angry\_\_\_
4. When I feel angry,.....I know it is normal\_\_\_, I think it is wrong\_\_\_
5. I feel angry at my mother (or father) for dying..... most of the time\_\_\_, sometimes\_\_\_, not at all\_\_\_
6. I feel angry at God and the world for letting my mother (or father) die. True\_\_\_, somewhat true\_\_\_, not true at all\_\_\_
7. I feel angry when I think of the things my mother or father did when she or he was alive. True\_\_\_, somewhat true\_\_\_, not true at all\_\_\_
8. I feel angry at my friends because they don't understand how I feel. True\_\_\_, somewhat true\_\_\_, not true at all\_\_\_

9. Other reasons I have for feeling angry are \_\_\_\_\_

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THE END

Go back to your small group and talk about feeling angry since your mother or father died.

**#HAVE THE YOUTHS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH ANGER SINCE THE DEATH OF THEIR PARENT. ALLOW FIVE MINUTES FOR SHARING.**

**#BRING EVERYONE BACK TOGETHER.**

Using the Feeling Thermometer - 100 = very uncomfortable and 0 = completely comfortable - how do you feel after exploring guilt and anger?

**#HOLD UP A CHART OF THE FEELING THERMOMETER.**

**#ENCOURAGE SHARING OF FEELING THERMOMETER READINGS. GIVE OUT "THANKS."**

Did it feel good to talk about your feelings today?

Did it bother you to talk about your feelings?

And what do you think are the barriers to talking about how you feel?

**#ENCOURAGE A DISCUSSION OF EXPRESSING FEELINGS. LIST BARRIERS ON NEWSPRINT.**

As the sessions move on we will be dealing with some of these barriers.

## YOUTHS ALONE

### Exercise 3a: Can I Tell Mom or Dad Something?

(20 minutes)

**[The purposes of this exercise are to decrease fears and anxiety related to what a survivor would have wanted to express to a deceased parent and to experience those thoughts. A two chair dialogue is the vehicle employed.]**

There are times when we would really like to express ourselves to someone.

It would do us good to get it off our chest, but we are not comfortable facing the person and saying what is on our mind.

Talking to an empty chair can be helpful.

In that empty chair could be the imaginary other person or even another part of ourselves.

I want you to imagine that you are carrying on a conversation with your mom or dad after the death.

**#PLACE TWO CHAIRS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROOM. EXPLAIN THAT ONE CHAIR IS FOR THE MOTHER. POINT TO IT. THE OTHER CHAIR IS FOR THE YOUTH. POINT TO IT.**

This is the mother's chair, and this is your chair.

Start off by sitting in your chair.

If you want mom or dad to answer back, go sit in the other chair and play that part.

What would you like to say to your mother?

**#MODEL SITTING IN THE CHAIR AND TALKING TO THE EMPTY CHAIR.**

For example, "Mom, I hope you are comfortable wherever you are. I miss you very much and wish I had told you I loved you more than I did when you were alive. I hope you will forgive me, but things were so bad that last month that I wanted you to die. I just didn't think I could take it anymore."

#MOVE IN TO THE OTHER CHAIR AND PLAY THE MOTHER.

"Yes, daughter (OR DAUGHTER). I know it was hard on you at the end. I forgive you for wanting to have it over. Wanting peace and to ease the pain and hardship is a natural thing."  
Here's another example.

#MODEL SITTING IN THE CHAIR AND TALKING TO THE EMPTY CHAIR.

"Mom, I'm really angry at you. Why did you have to and get sick. It was your own fault. You knew you could get infected through shooting up, but you wouldn't stop."

#MOVE IN TO THE OTHER CHAIR AND PLAY THE MOTHER.

"I know I made big mistakes in my life. I wish I hadn't. I wasn't the kind of mother I wanted to be, but I always loved you. I wish you could forgive me. I need your love."

Are there any questions?

#ANSWER QUESTIONS AND CLARIFY THE TASK.

You can say whatever you want to.

This is a safe place.

Every young person here has gone through a death.

I am going to go around the room and give everyone the chance to carry on a brief conversation.

**#ENCOURAGE EACH YOUTH TO SPEAK TO HIS DECEASED PARENT IN THE EMPTY CHAIR. TRY TO KEEP THE CONVERSATIONS UNDER TWO MINUTES EACH. YOUTHS HAVE THE OPTION NOT TO SPEAK TO THE EMPTY CHAIR.**

Thank you for sharing those thoughts.

**#HOLD UP THE FEELING THERMOMETER CHART.**

How did you feel communicating with the empty chair?

**#ENCOURAGE SHARING OF FEELING THERMOMETER READINGS.**

Next let's remember the parent that you lost.

## YOUTHS ALONE

### Exercise 4a: How Do I Remember Mom or Dad? (20 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to contribute to youths remembering and accepting their deceased parent as they were. Drawing a card and then performing the memory task stated on the card is the process.]**

At the time of death it can be difficult to accept a parent just as she or he was.

We may think it is wrong or bad to remember the things we didn't like.

On the other hand, if we are angry with mom or dad, we may want to forget anything good that they did.

It helps you grieve normally to accept your mother or father as a human being with good points and not-so good points.

I am going to have you draw a card.

On the card it will ask you to remember something about your mom or dad and, after you think of it, tell us about the memory.

First tell us what the card wants you to remember and then share the memory with us.

For example, if the card said to remember when you got spanked by your mother, you might remember the time you were a little kid and came home an hour late for dinner.

It might have went like this:

She took down your pants, made you lean over the side of the bath tub, and used a hair brush on your rear end.

Have you got the idea?

#CLARIFY ANY CONFUSION ABOUT THE TASK.

When the card asks you for a memory, it is always asking about the parent who just died.

#ONE AT A TIME HAVE YOUTHS DRAW A CARD, READ THE TASK ALOUD AND THEN TELL THE GROUP THE MEMORY. WHEN ONE YOUTH HAS FINISHED, MOVE ON TO THE NEXT ONE. IF THE GROUP IS SMALLER THAN 5 PARTICIPANTS, GO AROUND TWICE. THE CARDS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. PLEASE TELL US THE FUNNIEST TIME YOU EVER HAD WITH YOUR MOM OR DAD.
2. PLEASE TELL US ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOUR MOTHER OR FATHER WAS REALLY IRRITATING.
3. PLEASE TELL US ABOUT A SITUATION WHERE YOUR MOTHER OR FATHER REALLY UNDERSTOOD WHAT YOU WERE GOING THROUGH.
4. PLEASE TELL US ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOUR MOTHER OR FATHER WAS VERY MEAN TO YOU.
5. PLEASE TELL US ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOUR MOTHER OR DAD WAS REALLY NICE TO YOU.
6. PLEASE TELL US ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOUR MOM OR DAD WAS REALLY GENEROUS TO YOU.
7. PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOUR MOM'S OR DAD'S MOST ANNOYING HABIT WAS.
8. PLEASE TELL US OF A TIME WHEN YOUR MOM OR DAD SACRIFICED SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO HER OR HIM FOR YOU.
9. PLEASE TELL US ABOUT SOMETHING YOUR MOM OR DAD DID THAT HAS BEEN VERY HARD TO FORGIVE.
10. PLEASE TELL US A TIME WHEN YOUR MOM OR DAD PROTECTED YOU FROM SOME DANGER.
11. PLEASE TELL US ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOUR MOM OR DAD DID SOMETHING WHICH REALLY EMBARRASSED YOU.
12. PLEASE TELL US ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOUR MOM OR DAD REALLY HURT YOUR FEELINGS.

That was great!

#HOLD UP A CHART OF THE FEELING THERMOMETER. [USE THE PRE-PRINTED GRAPHIC.]

How do you feel after recalling those situations?

ENCOURAGE RESPONSES.

The parent you talked to in the chair maybe only one version of that person.

Let's check out other memories.

**NOTE: THERE IS NO EXERCISE #5 FOR THE YOUTHS.**  
YOUTHS JOIN CAREGIVERS FOR NEXT EXERCISE (Exercise 6, pg 30). CAREGIVERS AND YOUTHS SHOULD FINISH THE SEPARATE EXERCISES AT THE SAME TIME (TOTAL SEPARATE TIME = 75 MINUTES)

## CAREGIVERS/PARENTS ALONE

### Exercise 2b: How Has My Life Changed? (30 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to support the remaining parents and caregivers in dealing with handling their new roles. Building group support through sharing and identifying resources that help them are the strategies used. NOTE: CAREGIVERS AND YOUTHS SHOULD BE IN SEPARATE ROOMS.]**

You are all at different places.

This is because some of you were close to the person who died, while others were not.

Some were already acting as a parent before the person died.

Some had a great relationship with the children before the person died and others did not.

Those of you who were close to the person who died have your own sadness to deal with.

You may also feel anger over having been saddled with new responsibilities which are very difficult.

And some of you may feel guilt over how you treated the person who died.

For many caregivers there is more than the loss of the person to contend with.

Other possible losses include the loss of freedom to come and go as you please, the loss of time, of privacy, of friends, sleep, and money to name a few.

What are examples of losses that you have encountered?

ENCOURAGE THE GROUP TO CALL OUT EXAMPLES OF LOSSES. WRITE THEM ON NEWSPRINT. A LIST MIGHT LOOK LIKE THE FOLLOWING:

PRIVACY  
TIME TO ONESELF  
FREEDOM TO COME AND GO AS ONE PLEASED  
SLEEP  
TIME  
ROUTINE  
QUIET  
READING TIME  
MONEY  
FAVORITE TV SHOWS  
INFORMATION  
TRAVEL  
FRIENDS

That's a great list of losses that have come about as a result of becoming a caregiver.

Each loss probably requires a different strategy to fix it.

What's the problem?

What are some different solutions?

Which one looks best?

How would I put it into effect?

What have you done to fix some of these losses or at least live with them?

ENCOURAGE IDEAS ON COPING WITH LOSSES.

Those are some good ideas.

You have the double responsibility of looking after yourself and taking care of the kids.

Throughout we will try to help you meet your own needs and meet the needs of the children you care for.

We will be having sessions for you on ways to cope, skills for dealing with teenagers, and getting support for yourself.

Next we want to explore a child's reactions to death.

## CAREGIVERS ALONE

### Exercise 3b: What Are Children's Needs? (15 minutes)

**[The purpose of these next exercises is to increase the caregivers'/parents' knowledge of how to help a grieving child. Similarities and differences between age groups on grieving is presented in this exercise.]**

The purpose of what is to follow is to increase your understanding of what to do for a grieving child.

I am going to take a few minutes and talk to you about some background issues before going into what to do.

Although this entire program is for teenagers, we know that some of you are taking care of younger children in the family where the mother or father just died of AIDS.

Therefore we will cover little children as well as adolescents.

Children under the age of five often see death as temporary.

The person will come back.

Death is related to accidents and violence.

If people take care of themselves, they will live forever.

Little children need to hear over and over again that the person is dead and will not be coming back.

What little children fear is the separation from their parent, and this is where help is needed from you.

Older children can understand death better, but they don't believe it will happen to anyone they know.

When a parent dies, they feel small, helpless and afraid.

They have lost what was familiar and secure.

Children in this age group cannot handle feeling grief for a long period of time.

So, they will move in and out of it.

Teenagers understand death but are so uncomfortable with it that they want to avoid talking about it.

Teenagers often feel angry that the world is so unfair.

They withdraw or behave in a negative way instead of expressing their sorrow.

They may seem ungrateful when in reality they are so wrapped up in their grief that they cannot attend to the needs of other people.

For the moment saying, "Thank you" has dropped out of their vocabulary.

It may take years for a teenager to finally confront the death of a parent.

But what do all these groups - adults, teenagers, children, and pre-schoolers - have in common when it comes to grieving?

**#ENCOURAGE IDEAS. BUILD A GROUP LIST. BELOW ARE THE MAIN IDEAS THAT THE LIST NEEDS TO CONTAIN. IF ONE OF THE IDEAS IS NOT MENTIONED, BRING IT UP AND GET THE GROUP'S REACTION TO IT.**

**COMMON GRIEF REACTIONS OF ADULTS AND CHILDREN**

1. NEED TO EXPERIENCE THE FEELINGS OF GUILT, ANGER, AND SADNESS.
2. NEED TO EXPRESS THEIR FEELINGS.
3. NEED TO BE LISTENED TO.
4. NEED BREAKS FROM GRIEVING FOR THE DEAD PARENT.

5. LONG FOR THE PERSON WHO IS DEAD.
6. NEED TO SAY GOODBYE IN THEIR OWN WAY.
7. NEED TO FORM NEW RELATIONSHIPS.
8. NEED TO CONTINUE ON WITH LIFE.

That's a good list.

We have taken a few minutes to give you some background on grief and children.

Next we want to explore the things you can do to help the children whose parent is dead.

## CAREGIVERS/PARENTS ALONE

### Exercise 4b: What Can We Do To Help? (15 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to provide a cognitive map for helping a youngster deal with the loss of a parent. Providing guidelines and discussion is the approach.]**

You can't be expected to help a youngster without know what are the right things to do.

Here is a list of suggestions.

#HAND OUT "WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP THE CHILDREN."

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP THE CHILDREN

1. **Listen** to their ideas and feelings.
2. Put yourself **in their shoes**.
3. **Answer honestly** all their questions . There are no questions that should not be answered. If "I don't know" is the truth, then it is the best answer.
4. **Assure** them that you and other important people **will be there** when they need them.
5. Assure them that their needs for **food, shelter, and protection** will be taken care of.
6. Tell them it is **OK to be sad or angry**.
7. Help them **talk about** the person who died.
8. Tell them it is **OK to cry**.
9. Let them know that people are **supporting you** in your grief.
10. **Allow** them to still be children.
11. Keep **change** to a **minimum**. Same place, same activities, same lifestyle, same discipline, same stability.

12. Set up the child with an **on-going special relationship** with another adult of the same sex as the one who died.
13. Help them figure out **what to say to** friends, teachers, and so on.
14. **Inform** teachers of the death.
15. Do something special and meaningful on **birthdays, holidays, and anniversaries**.

Most of you have had someone close to you die.

Think back on what you needed.

Read the suggestion that you are given and tell us whether you agree or not.

Let's go around the room, and each person read a line until we have covered them all.

**#PICK A PERSON TO START THE READING WITH. HAVE EACH PERSON READ ONE SUGGESTION. KEEP GOING UNTIL ALL THE POINTS HAVE BEEN READ. IF SOMEONE DOES NOT AGREE WITH THE SUGGESTION, PROBE TO FIND OUT WHY? PROBE BUT DON'T TRY TO CONVINCEN.**

Sometimes the words in a handout like this one are unfamiliar.

That may make it hard to read.

If this is the case, just ask us what the word means when it's your turn.

**#AFTER ALL THE LINES HAVE BEEN READ, CHECK OUT REACTIONS.**

Would you add some other advice to the list?

Would you drop any of these or change them?

#ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION OF THE GUIDELINES.

We have tried to provide you with some understanding of children and death and some ideas about that to do to help a child or teenager whose parent has died.

CAREGIVERS/PARENTS ALONE

Exercise 5: How Can I Try Out What I Learned?  
(15 minutes)

**[The purpose of this exercise is to improve skills in working with a child about a parental AIDS death. Quick role plays are used.]**

Remember the guidelines we just went over for dealing with children.

I will be the child and say something to you.

Following the guidelines you respond to me.

When you are finished we will give you feedback.

GO UP TO EACH PERSON - ONE AT A TIME. SAY ONE OF THE SENTENCES BELOW. ALLOW THE ROLE PLAY TO GO FOR JUST A FEW LINES. ASK THE GROUP TO RESPOND TO HOW THE CAREGIVER HANDLED THE SITUATION.

STARTER SENTENCES FOR FACILITATOR:

1. Tell me the truth. What did my mother die of?
2. I guess I shouldn't be crying all the time.
3. Where is my mom now?
4. What happens if you get sick too?
5. What if we get kicked out of this apartment?
6. I'm sorry that every little thing makes me mad.
7. My father is dead; I don't want to think about him.
8. What will we do if we don't have enough money?
9. I want to change everything: new house, new school, new friends, new neighborhood, new life, new face, new hair.

10. Do you ever get sad and cry when nobody is looking?
11. It has been four months to the day that my mother died.
12. You are so old. It makes me worry a lot.

When we give people feedback, be sure to follow the way we do it here.

First, we ask the person playing the part what one thing he or she liked about what she or he did and one thing she or he would have done differently.

Then we say what one thing we liked about the person's performance and what one thing we would have done differently.

**AFTER THE FEEDBACK ENCOURAGE SOME GENERAL  
COMMENTS ON THE GUIDELINES AND ROLE PLAY.**

Now we are going to join the youths and set some goals for the next session.

**BRING THE YOUTHS AND CAREGIVERS BACK TOGETHER.**

## YOUTHS AND CAREGIVERS TOGETHER

### Exercise 6: What Is My Goal For Between Sessions? (15 minutes)

**[The purposes of this exercise are to encourage transferring what was learned to the real-life setting, to increase self-esteem, and to build group cohesion and support. Goal setting and group appreciation are used.]**

At the end of each session we set goals to achieve between today and the next time we meet.

#### #SHOW THE GOAL SETTING CHART.

A good goal is realistic, clear, not too much or too little, and easy to see if it was completed.

At the end of each day here we want you to agree to do one task between that day and when you come again.

Your goal is to accomplish that task.

The task is something you choose, and it should be related to what the session was all about.

Here are some examples of tasks:

I agree to talk to my grandmother about what my mother was like as a teenager.

I agree to set up a n appointment with a school counselor.

I agree to have my teeth checked by the dentist.

I agree to do a nice thing for my caregiver during the next week.

I agree to go through my mothers ear rings and see if I want any of them.

By asking you to complete a task at home we are trying to make sure that what we do in here gets transferred to out into daily life.

You will select only one goal for the day, and that will happen at the end of the day.

But you may want your task to be about what we did this morning.

So, I am going to ask you to think of a task related to this morning.

At the end of the day you may decide not to use it.

Take a few minutes and think of a task for this morning, like talk to your deceased parent in the empty chair or a caregiver might want to explore with a younger child what her or his ideas are about the death of the parent.

ALLOW THREE MINUTES FOR SELECTING A POSSIBLE TASK.

Let's hear what you came up with.

HAVE PEOPLE REPORT ON THEIR TASK.

Remember that you can select a task from this afternoon as well.

The last thing for today is to show appreciation to other group members for their contributions today.

Let them know you liked what they said or did, their presence, their style or anything else.

Use "Thanks," words, hugs, handshakes, pats on the back, and whatever makes you feel comfortable.

#ENCOURAGE GIVING APPRECIATION. MODEL HOW  
APPRECIATION IS GIVEN. REINFORCE GROUP MEMBERS AS  
THEY COMPLIMENT OTHER PARTICIPANTS.

We'll see you after lunch.

After lunch we are going to change the topic a bit and work on listening skills.

END OF SESSION 5 - ADJUSTMENT PHASE

## LOOKING AT GUILT

Guilt is one of the most uncomfortable feelings we can have. When we think that we did something bad or something that caused a bad thing to happen, we feel terrible. There are also times we feel bad because we didn't do something we wished we had done. When someone special dies, we think about things we wish we had done or said.

Sometimes we even wonder if we did something that led to the person's death. These thoughts lead to feelings of guilt and regret. We need people who are willing to listen to us talk about these things so that we can feel better about ourselves.

Instructions: Check the statements that best fit you.

1. I feel guilty since the death of my mother (or father)..... most of the time \_\_\_\_, some of the time \_\_\_\_, almost never \_\_\_\_.
2. When I do feel guilty, it is.....terrible \_\_\_\_, not so bad \_\_\_\_, just a tiny amount \_\_\_\_.
3. When I say that I feel guilty, people..... listen to me \_\_\_\_, ignore me \_\_\_\_, tell me not to feel that way \_\_\_\_.
4. When I feel guilty,....I know it is normal \_\_\_\_, I think it is wrong \_\_\_\_
5. When I feel guilty,... I let myself talk about it \_\_\_\_, I try not to think about it \_\_\_\_
6. There are things I did a long time ago that I feel guilty about again. yes \_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_
7. I feel guilty because \_\_\_\_\_

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## LOOKING AT ANGER

Anger is a normal feeling that all people have at times. It helps us know that something is wrong, and it helps people know what problems they need to work out together. It is important to let people know when we are angry. We are not bad when we are angry. We are just trying to let people who matter to us know that something does not seem right.

When someone who is special to us dies, we may feel very, very angry. Something very important is definitely not right, and we want people to know how we feel about that. Sometimes the anger feels really bad because even though it shows what is wrong (like someone special has died) it doesn't help solve the problem. (It can't bring the person back to life.) Still it is normal to be angry and often helps us feel a little better to let people know we are angry.

Instructions: Check the statements that best fit you.

1. I feel angry after the death of my mother (father).....most of the time\_\_\_, some of the time\_\_\_, almost never\_\_\_
2. When I do feel anger, it is..... very strong\_\_\_, a medium amount\_\_\_, not very much\_\_\_
3. When I feel angry, people.....listen to me\_\_\_, ignore me\_\_\_, tell me not to be angry\_\_\_
4. When I feel angry,.....I know it is normal\_\_\_, I think it is wrong\_\_\_
5. I feel angry at my mother (or father) for dying..... most of the time\_\_\_, sometimes\_\_\_, not at all\_\_\_
6. I feel angry at God and the world for letting my mother (or father) die. True\_\_\_, somewhat true\_\_\_, not true at all\_\_\_
7. I feel angry when I think of the things my mother or father did when she or he was alive. True\_\_\_, somewhat true\_\_\_, not true at all\_\_\_
8. I feel angry at my friends because they don't understand how I feel. True\_\_\_, somewhat true\_\_\_, not true at all\_\_\_
9. Other reasons I have for feeling angry are\_\_\_\_\_

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## GOAL SETTING CHART

### **A PERSONAL GOAL SHOULD:**

#Be Realistic

#Be Clear

#Not Be Too Easy or Too Hard

#Have A Clear End Point So You Can Recognize  
When It's Been Accomplished



5. PLEASE TELL US ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOUR MOTHER OR DAD WAS REALLY NICE TO YOU.

6. PLEASE TELL US ABOUT A TIME WHEN YOUR MOM OR DAD WAS REALLY GENEROUS TO YOU.

7. PLEASE TELL US WHAT YOUR MOM'S OR DAD'S MOST ANNOYING HABIT WAS.

8. PLEASE TELL US OF A TIME WHEN YOUR MOM OR DAD SACRIFICED SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO HER OR HIM FOR YOU.



## WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP THE CHILDREN

1. **Listen** to their ideas and feelings.
2. Put yourself **in their shoes**.
3. **Answer honestly** all their questions . There are no questions that should not be answered. If "I don't know" is the truth, then it is the best answer.
4. **Assure** them that you and other important people **will be there** when they need them.
5. Assure them that their needs for **food, shelter, and protection** will be taken care of.
6. Tell them it is **OK to be sad or angry**.
7. Help them **talk about** the person who died.
8. Tell them it is **OK to cry**.
9. Let them know that people are **supporting you** in your grief.
10. **Allow** them to still be children.
11. Keep **change** to a **minimum**. Same place, same activities, same lifestyle, same discipline, same stability.
12. Set up the child with an **on-going special relationship** with another adult of the same sex as the one who died.
13. Help them figure out **what to say to** friends, teachers, and so on.
14. **Inform** teachers of the death.
15. Do something special and meaningful on **birthdays, holidays, and anniversaries**.