

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

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

OBJECTIVES:

1. Youths and caregivers will be able to identify normal grieving.
2. Youths and caregivers will be able to talk about the deceased parent.
3. Youths will begin to express feelings about the death of their parent - Part I, sadness
4. Caregivers will express feelings about person they lost, what is difficult, and identify concerns over the grieving process.
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 grief three sessions over the next three Saturdays (Sessions 3, 5 & 8) is dealing with loss and grief.

This session is on understanding 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. Through a script and working with attitudes toward grieving, an attempt is made to present grief as a normal reaction to a significant loss. Then steps are taken to foster the grieving process. Such steps include talking about the deceased person and exploring current feelings of sadness. (Other feelings, such as guilt and anger, are addressed in subsequent sessions.) 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 - if they were close to the deceased parent.

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. Explain how the sessions work. Give out "Thanks." Do a lottery. Review between session tasks. (10 minutes)
2. Use a script to introduce grief. (10 minutes)
3. Use grief cards to make points about normal grief. (35 minutes)
4. Review personal guidelines on grieving and discuss. (10 minutes)
5. Introduce the participants and talk about the person who died. (20 minutes)
- 6a. Have youths meet separately and explore feelings about the death of their parent, focusing on sadness. (25 minutes)
- 6b. Have caregivers/parents meet separately and discuss their own losses and grief and what is difficult. (25 minutes)
7. Set goals for the next session and show appreciation. (10 minutes)

MATERIALS:

"Thanks"
Lottery tickets
Lottery prize
Feeling Thermometer Chart
Newsprint and marking pens
Goal Setting Chart
Goal Summary Sheet
Goal Cards (blank index cards)
Script: That's It
Grief Cards
Pencils
Looking at Sadness
Guidelines for Grieving

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 Happens In These Sessions?
(10 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to create a comfortable and rewarding atmosphere, to explain how the sessions work, and to review between session tasks. Personal introductions are saved for a later exercise when the comfort and trust levels have increased. A lottery, "Thanks," goal review, and explanations are used here.]

#THE FACILITATOR SAYS

Welcome back to these sessions on dealing with the death of a parent and adjusting to a new life together.

I'm glad that all of you could be here.

I want to make two comments before we get going.

First of all, losing someone special is a very difficult and powerful experience for everyone.

Everyone hurts.

Everyone feels strange.

Second, people of all ages can recover from losing someone they love and go on to have a happy life.

Grief is actually a way to help us recover and become happy again.

We will deal with grief more as we go along.

Now let's begin the session.

We often start our sessions with a lottery.

I will pass out the lottery tickets, and then we'll draw a prize.

Everyone, write your name on a ticket.

#PASS OUT THE LOTTERY TICKETS. HAVE EACH GROUP MEMBER WRITE HIS/HER NAME ON ONE, COLLECT THEM, MIX THEM UP, AND DRAW A WINNER. THEN GIVE OUT THE PRIZE. [NOTE: FOR SESSION 3, THERE WILL BE ONE PRIZE, AND ALL GROUP MEMBERS WILL PUT THEIR NAMES IN.]

We have four goals in these sessions.

One is to create a strong family for the caregiver, and teenager whose parent has died.

The second goal is to help the teenager and caregiver handle strong emotions constructively.

The third is to help the caregivers support the youths.

And the fourth is to support the caregiver in coping with this new and sometimes difficult situation.

Another important thing that we do in these sessions is to let people know when we like what they said or did.

When we like that they came to the session.

When we like something they said.

When we like the way they present themselves.

When we like a quality about them.

One way to show our appreciation is to give them a "Thanks."

This is a "Thanks."

#HOLD UP A "THANKS."

Everyone will receive a pile of "Thanks," and I hope yours are all gone - given to other people in the group - by the time we end today.

Here are your "Thanks."

#GIVE TWENTY "THANKS" TO EACH GROUP MEMBER.

At the end of the last session you agreed to do a task between sessions.

That task related to working out what was expected of you around the home.

How did that work out?

#GO AROUND THE ROOM AND HAVE EACH FAMILY REPORT ON HOW THE TASK WENT. YOUTHS WITHOUT A CAREGIVER PRESENT TELL WHAT HAPPENED TRYING TO DO THE TASK OR HOW RESPONSIBILITIES WERE DIVIDED UP. GIVE OUT "THANKS" FREQUENTLY.

That was great.

Do you have any reactions to what the families presented?

#ENCOURAGE COMMENTS.

Later on we will work on how to settle disagreements around task assignments.

Next we will learn about grief and grieving.

Exercise 2: What Is Grief?
(10 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to convey to participants that grief is a normal reaction to loss and to help them feel more comfortable grieving. A script and the Feeling Thermometer are used to accomplish the desired end.]

To start exploring grieving when a parent dies I want to present a little scene.

Who will play Lewis and who will play Jamie?

#SELECT TWO VOLUNTEERS AND DECIDE WHO WILL PLAY EACH PART. IT IS DESIRABLE FOR TWO YOUTHS TO READ THE PARTS, BUT IF THE FACILITATOR SENSES THAT HAVING YOUTHS READ THE PARTS WILL BE TOO UPSETTING, THEN THE FACILITATOR AND CO-FACILITATOR READ THE PARTS.

#GIVE THE PLAYERS THE SCRIPTS AND HAVE THEM READ THE SCENE ALOUD TO THE GROUP.

THAT'S IT

LEWIS: What's happening?

JAMIE: Nothing.

LEWIS: How you been?

JAMIE: Fine.

LEWIS: I haven't seen you for about a month.

JAMIE: That's about it.

LEWIS: You didn't go away, did you?

JAMIE: No, I've been right here.

LEWIS: You must have been hiding.

JAMIE: No. I always keep a low profile.

LEWIS: I just thought that afterwards..... afterwards, you might have gone some place.

JAMIE: Are you playing basketball this year?

LEWIS: If I get my grades up. What about you?

JAMIE: I'm thinking about it.

LEWIS: It might be good for you to play. Keep your mind off your mother dying like that.

JAMIE: How'd you know my mother died?

LEWIS: Get real, Jamie. Everybody knows your mother died.

JAMIE: She was sick.

LEWIS: Is it true she had AIDS?

JAMIE: Does everybody know that too?

LEWIS: A lot of people do. You act like that bothers you.

JAMIE: I don't know any more what bothers me. I guess I feel kind of ashamed, and then I feel guilty for feeling ashamed.

LEWIS: There's nothing wrong with that. I know.

JAMIE: Don't tell me you know how I feel. I hate that. Nobody knows how I feel.

LEWIS: I wasn't going to say that. My mom died of AIDS a couple of years ago. Before I met you. I wasn't at the hospital when she died. We didn't get along too well. We'd just had a big fight. Afterwards, I was really sorry I had been mean to her. I still am.

JAMIE: Did you ever think you were going crazy? I keep hearing my mom in the apartment. I think she's calling me. I catch myself talking to her. It's weird.

LEWIS: You're not going crazy. That happens to a lot of people. When your mom is dead, everything changes. Your family will never be the same again. You will never be the same again. I had so many feelings, and they all hurt. I was pissed. I was scared. I was so sad. The hurting was terrible.

JAMIE: How could you be sad if you didn't like her?

LEWIS: I can't explain it. Don't try to figure things out, Jamie. Just let how you feel come out. I'll tell

you - no matter what the guys say - you got to cry. Put your head in your pillow and cry your heart out. Cry until no more tears come.

JAMIE: I cried a little.

LEWIS: It hasn't been that long since she died. There's got to be more tears inside.

JAMIE: I guess so. I can't believe she's dead. This is all unreal. It can't be happening to me. I want to call out to her, "Mom, mom, come back. Come back. don't leave me alone."

THE END

First, I want to thank the players for a great job.

#GIVE THE PLAYERS "THANKS."

Do you remember the Feeling Thermometer?

#SHOW A CHART OF THE FEELING THERMOMETER.

100 degrees means you are feeling very uncomfortable, and 0 degrees means you feel completely comfortable.

How did you feel watching this scene between Lewis and Jamie?

#ENCOURAGE SHARING OF FEELING THERMOMETER READINGS.

Did you have feeling reactions to the scene?

Did you have thinking reactions to the scene?

Did the scene strike home or raise questions?

#ENCOURAGE SHARING OF REACTIONS TO THE SCENE.

Death is something that people don't want to think about or talk about.

It is like a big tiger sitting in the middle of the hallway, nipping at people as they try to go about their usual business.

Everyone squeezes by, but no one admits they have seen the tiger or that it scared them or hurt them.

Because we don't talk about death, when it happens, we wonder if how we feel is normal.

Sometimes uncertainty leads to hiding our feelings - even from ourselves - which makes dealing with the loss of a parent even harder.

Exercise 3: Understanding Grief
(35 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to convey to participants that grief is a normal reaction to loss and to help them understand the many different kinds of reactions that people have to loss. Grief cards are used to accomplish the desired end.]

To set the facts straight about people's reactions to loss I am going to give each person a card with the answer to a question about grieving on it.

I will ask the question.

You give the answer, and then everyone can discuss it.

These first cards are for the youths in the group, but the questions and answers are helpful to new caregivers and parents also.

After the youths have answered the questions, we will give cards to caregivers and parents.

#FACILITATORS: SELECT YOUTH AND CAREGIVER CARDS THAT MEET THE GROUPS' NEEDS. CHOOSE THE CARDS AHEAD OF TIME. TRY TO USE AT LEAST 10 YOUTH CARDS.

GIVE ONE "YOUTH GRIEF CARD" TO EACH YOUTH AND ONE "CAREGIVER/PARENT GRIEF CARD" TO EACH CAREGIVER. IF TIME ALLOWS, PASS OUT SECOND CARDS TO YOUTHS. NOTE THAT THERE ARE 7 CAREGIVER CARDS, SO CAREGIVERS/PARENTS WILL NEED TO SHARE; I.E., MORE THAN ONE CAREGIVER/PARENT WILL ANSWER A QUESTION ON A CARD.

#START WITH YOUTHS. ASK ONE QUESTION AT A TIME. HAVE THE YOUTH WITH THE CORRESPONDING ANSWER READ THE ANSWER TO THE GROUP. CHECK OUT THE GROUP'S REACTIONS, EXPERIENCES, AND DEGREE OF AGREEMENT WITH THE ANSWER. THE "GRIEF CARDS" FOLLOW. NOTE: WHAT THE FACILITATOR SAYS STARTS AGAIN ON PAGE 24.

FOR YOUTHS

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 1

QUESTION

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO FEEL BETTER AFTER A PARENT HAS DIED?

ANSWER

IT TAKES A LONG TIME TO FEEL BETTER. MANY PEOPLE GRIEVE FOR A YEAR OR LONGER. THERE ARE UPS AND DOWNS, BUT AS TIME GOES ON, THE PERIODS OF FEELING OK LAST LONGER. CHILDREN MAY NEED MORE TIME THAN A SURVIVING PARENT OR CAREGIVER.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 2

QUESTION

EVER SINCE MY MOTHER DIED I HAVE FELT ANGRY. IS IT WRONG TO FEEL ANGRY?

ANSWER

NO, IT IS NOT WRONG TO FEEL ANGER. ANGER IS ONE OF THE FEELINGS THAT PEOPLE EXPERIENCE WHEN THEY ARE GRIEVING OVER THE LOSS OF A PARENT. ANYONE IN THE FAMILY CAN HAVE SUCH A FEELING.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 3

QUESTION

MY MOTHER AND I NEVER GOT ON WELL. ONE DAY WE HAD A BIG FIGHT, AND I TOLD HER TO GET OUT OF MY LIFE. TWO WEEKS LATER SHE DIED. I WONDER IF SHE GAVE UP ON LIVING AFTER OUR FIGHT. IS IT TRUE THAT HER DEATH WAS MY FAULT?

ANSWER

YOUR MOTHER DIED OF AIDS. SHE WOULD HAVE DIED NO MATTER HOW YOU TREATED HER. YOU DID NOT CAUSE HER DEATH. ALL HUMAN BEINGS REGRET THAT THEY DID CERTAIN THINGS IN THEIR LIVES.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 4

QUESTION

I FEEL LIKE GOING INTO MY ROOM AND BEING ALONE. I DON'T WANT ANYONE AROUND WHEN I FEEL VERY SAD. IS THIS NORMAL?

ANSWER

ANYONE CLOSE TO YOUR MOTHER CAN FEEL SAD OVER HER DEATH. SOME PEOPLE PREFER TO BE SAD WHERE THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE FOR COMFORT. OTHERS, LIKE YOURSELF, WANT TO FEEL SAD IN PRIVATE. FEELING SAD IS NORMAL, AND THERE IS NO ONE RIGHT WAY TO FEEL IT.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 5

QUESTION

WHY DO CHILDREN FEEL AFRAID WHEN A PARENT DIES?

ANSWER

MOST OF A CHILD'S FEARS WHEN A PARENT HAS DIED COMES FROM FEELING SO SMALL AND POWERLESS. OF COURSE, CHILDREN FEAR CHANGES IN THEIR LIVES. BUT ON TOP OF THAT FEAR ARE TWO OTHER IMPORTANT ONES: THE FEAR THAT SOMEONE ELSE CLOSE MIGHT DIE AND THE FEAR THAT THEY THEMSELVES MIGHT DIE.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 6

QUESTION

HOW IS DEATH DIFFERENT THAN OTHER KINDS OF LOSS?

ANSWER

WITH DEATH IT SEEMS LIKE THERE ARE NO NEW BEGINNINGS - ONLY A VERY SAD ENDING. IT IS THE HARDEST LOSS OF ALL, AND NOTHING HAS PREPARED YOU FOR IT.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 7

QUESTION

WHEN YOUR MOTHER DIES, DO YOU LOSE ONLY YOUR MOTHER?

ANSWER

NO. DEATH BRINGS MANY OTHER LOSSES. 1) LOSS OF TRUST - IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU OR SOME OTHER LOVED ONE. 2) LOSS OF SECURITY - WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOU NOW? 3) LOSS OF FAITH - HOW COULD GOD ALLOW THIS? 4) LOSS OF DREAMS - LIFE WILL NEVER BE THE SAME. 5) LOSS OF SELF - WHO AM I WITHOUT HER? 6) LOSS OF PURPOSE - THE ROAD AHEAD IS SO UNCERTAIN.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 8

QUESTION

IS GRIEF A DISEASE OR A SIGN OF WEAKNESS?

ANSWER

NEITHER. GRIEF IS NOT A DISEASE NOR A SIGN OF WEAKNESS. GRIEF IS SOMETHING YOU HAVE TO GO THROUGH TO GET RID OF IT. THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANY WAY TO GET BEYOND GRIEF BUT TO GO THROUGH IT. THAT'S WHY WE ARE DOING THIS TODAY.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 9

QUESTION

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I KEEP MY GRIEF BURIED?

ANSWER

BURYING YOUR GRIEF WILL KEEP YOU FROM MOVING PAST THE FEELING OF LOSS AND GETTING ON WITH YOUR LIFE. THE CHANCES ARE GOOD THAT SOME DAY THAT BURIED GRIEF WILL EXPLODE AND DO YOU A GREAT DEAL OF DAMAGE.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 10

QUESTION

MY MOTHER JUST DIED. ARE THERE SOME FEELINGS I SHOULDN'T HAVE?

ANSWER

IT IS OK TO FEEL DAZED, DISBELIEF, ANGER, ENVY, PANIC, RELIEF, AND LONELINESS. IT IS ALSO OK IF YOU DON'T HAVE SOME OF THOSE FEELINGS. SOMETIMES YOU MAY NOT BE

SURE HOW YOU FEEL. GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO FEEL THE WAY YOU ARE FEELING RIGHT NOW. FEELINGS KEEP CHANGING.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 11

QUESTION

SINCE MY MOM DIED I HAVE HAD SPLITTING HEADACHES AND FELT LIKE I WANTED TO VOMIT. ISN'T THAT ABNORMAL?

ANSWER

WHEN YOU ARE GRIEVING, YOU BECOME MORE VULNERABLE TO PHYSICAL COMPLAINTS AND ILLNESSES. IT'S YOUR BODY'S REACTION TO THE TRAGEDY IN YOUR LIFE. IT IS NOT UNCOMMON TO FEEL TIRED ALL THE TIME, BE UNABLE TO FALL ASLEEP, TO LOSE YOUR APPETITE, FEEL LIKE VOMITING, HAVE HEADACHES, FEEL DIZZY, HAVE A CHOKING SENSATION, OR FIND IT HARD TO BREATHE. DON'T THINK YOU ARE IMAGINING THE PAIN. IT IS REAL. AS TIME PASSES, THESE PHYSICAL PAINS WILL GET LESS AND GO AWAY.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 12

QUESTION

RECENTLY I CALLED HOME AND ASKED TO SPEAK TO MY MOM. SHE'S DEAD! AM I GOING CRAZY?

ANSWER

YOU ARE NOT LOSING IT. THINGS LIKE YOU DESCRIBE HAPPEN TO PEOPLE WHO ARE GRIEVING. YOU MAY GET LOST ON YOUR WAY TO SCHOOL, HEAR VOICES, TALK OUT LOUD TO YOUR MOM, TRY TO CALL HER, SEE HER WALKING IN THE MALL, FORGET YOUR NAME, AND DO OTHER THINGS THAT SEEM STRANGE. THESE ACTIONS ARE TEMPORARY AND WILL GO AWAY AS TIME PASSES.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 13

QUESTION

MY MOTHER WAS A SINGLE PARENT FOR YEARS. NOW SHE IS DEAD. ISN'T IT HARDER FOR A TEENAGER WHO HAS LOST BOTH PARENTS?

ANSWER

NO ONE CAN SAY THAT THE PAIN YOU FEEL IS STRONGER THAN THE PAIN ANOTHER TEENAGER FEELS. BUT HAVING LOST BOTH PARENTS CAN CREATE MORE PROBLEMS TO OVERCOME. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DECISIONS THAT PEOPLE WANT TO MAKE FOR YOU. YOU NEED TO HAVE YOUR SAY.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 14

QUESTION

MY FATHER DIDN'T LIVE WITH US, BUT HE HAS BEEN CLOSE BY. I THINK HE STILL LOVED MY MOTHER WHO JUST DIED OF AIDS. I LIVE WITH HIM NOW. IT IS UPSETTING TO SEE HIM OPENLY CRYING OVER HER DEATH. SHOULDN'T HE BE TRYING TO CONTROL HIMSELF?

ANSWER

THERE IS NO NEED TO BE AFRAID WHEN YOUR FATHER FEELS REAL BAD. HIS REACTION IS TO BE EXPECTED WHEN A HUSBAND LOSES A WIFE. IT MIGHT HELP BOTH OF YOU IF YOU AND YOUR FATHER TALKED ABOUT HOW THE TWO OF YOU FEEL.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 15

QUESTION

MY GRANDMOTHER IS TAKING CARE OF ME AND MY LITTLE SISTERS NOW THAT MY MOTHER DIED. WE ALL FEEL REALLY SAD. WHAT CAN WE DO?

ANSWER

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS THAT YOU, YOUR GRANDMOTHER, AND YOUR LITTLE SISTERS CAN DO ARE 1) TO TALK ABOUT YOUR MOTHER. TALK ABOUT GOOD TIMES AND BAD. 2) SHARE FEELINGS EVEN WHEN THEY HURT. IT'S OK TO CRY TOGETHER. THAT HELPS TOO.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 16

QUESTION

I KNOW IN MY MIND THAT MY MOTHER IS DEAD. I SAY THAT SHE IS DEAD. I HEAR THE

WORDS, BUT I DON'T BELIEVE IT. IS THAT WRONG?

ANSWER

SOMETIMES IT IS HARD TO ACCEPT HER DEATH AS FINAL. THAT'S NOT WRONG. IT JUST MAKES IT MORE DIFFICULT TO GET YOUR LIFE TOGETHER AND MOVE ON. TRY THINKING OF THINGS YOU COULD DO TO HELP YOURSELF TO ACCEPT THE REALITY. FOR EXAMPLE, THINGS LIKE GOING TO HER GRAVE, AND, WHEN YOU ARE READY, PUTTING MOST OF HER THINGS AWAY.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 17

QUESTION

I DID NOT LIKE MY MOTHER AT ALL AND TO BE HONEST I WANTED HER DEAD. I GUESS THAT MEANS THERE IS NOTHING TO GRIEVE ABOUT. IS THAT CORRECT?

ANSWER

WHEN YOU FEEL MOSTLY ANGER AND GUILT AND VERY LITTLE SADNESS, GRIEVING CAN BE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TO GET THROUGH. GRIEVING IS STILL POSSIBLE, PARTICULARLY IF YOU CAN ACCEPT THE IDEA THAT IT IS OKAY TO HAVE WANTED HER DEAD AND TO TALK ABOUT IT. IF YOU CAN DO THAT, LATER ON YOU MAY BE ABLE TO SEE A WAY TO LET GO OF YOUR DISLIKE OF HER AND FORGIVE HER.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 18

QUESTION

MY MOTHER DIED YESTERDAY. WE KNEW ALL WEEK THAT SHE WOULD DIE SOON. I AM HELPING TAKE CARE OF MY LITTLE BROTHER AND SISTER, AND I WANT TO KNOW IF THEY SHOULD COME TO THE FUNERAL.

ANSWER

IF THEY CAN SIT THROUGH THE CEREMONY, IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO LET THEM HAVE THE CHANCE TO SAY GOOD-BYE. IT WILL HELP THEM GET OVER THE SHOCK OF THEIR MOTHER'S DEATH.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 19

QUESTION

MY MOTHER DIED RECENTLY, AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO TELL MY 6 YEAR OLD SISTER. SHOULD I SAY THAT MOM WENT AWAY ON A LONG TRIP OR THAT SHE DIED BECAUSE SHE WAS SICK?

ANSWER

IF YOU SAY THAT YOUR MOM WENT AWAY, YOUR SISTER WILL KEEP WAITING FOR HER TO COME BACK AND WILL BE UPSET OVER THE FACT THAT YOUR MOM DIDN'T SAY GOODBYE OR EVEN SAY SHE WAS LEAVING. IF YOU SAY SHE DIED BECAUSE SHE WAS SICK, EVERY TIME SOMEONE IN THE FAMILY IS SICK, YOUR SISTER WILL THINK THAT PERSON IS GOING TO DIE. IN A SIMPLE WAY EXPLAIN WHAT BEING DEAD IS AND INDICATE THAT YOUR MOTHER IS DEAD. USE EXAMPLES FROM NATURE - DEAD ANIMALS AND TREES. ALSO THERE ARE SOME GOOD BOOKS ON DEATH THAT WILL HELP YOU TALK TO YOUR SISTER.

ONE BOOK IS STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT DEATH FOR TEENAGERS BY EARL A. GROLLMAN.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 20

QUESTION

I WAS NEVER MUCH INTO BEING SPIRITUAL BEFORE MY MOTHER'S DEATH. NOW I LOOK AT LIFE DIFFERENTLY AND HAVE MANY QUESTIONS. CAN RELIGION HELP ME?

ANSWER

MOST RELIGIONS DEAL WITH DEATH AND HAVE BEEN HELPFUL TO PEOPLE IN DEALING WITH THEIR SADNESS. IT CAN HELP PEOPLE UNDERSTAND WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT AND HOW DEATH IS A NATURAL PART OF OUR LIVES. RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES THAT BRING A SENSE OF BELONGING, COMFORT, HOPE, PEACE, AND WISDOM HAVE MUCH TO OFFER A GRIEVING PERSON.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 21

QUESTION

MY FATHER'S BIRTHDAY WAS LAST WEEK AND I FELT REALLY SAD. I THOUGHT I WAS OVER IT. WHEN DO I GET OVER IT?

ANSWER

MOST PEOPLE FIND THAT THEY ARE REMINDED ABOUT THE PERSON THEY LOST ON HOLIDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES, LIKE THEIR BIRTHDAY. MANY PEOPLE ALSO HAVE FEELINGS OF GRIEF AT SPECIAL EVENTS, SUCH AS HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE GRADUATION OR THEIR WEDDINGS. EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE GOING TO FEEL BETTER AS TIME GOES BY, THERE ARE STILL GOING TO BE EVENTS OVER YOUR LIFE THAT REMIND YOU OF THE PERSON YOU LOST, AND THIS IS NORMAL.

CAREGIVER CARDS

CAREGIVER/PARENT GRIEF CARD 1

QUESTION

I HATED TO SEE HER IN SO MUCH PAIN. THERE WERE DAYS WHEN I HOPED SHE WOULD DIE. I LOVED HER. HOW COULD I HAVE HAD SUCH A TERRIBLE WISH?

ANSWER

IT IS NATURAL TO WANT TO SEE SUFFERING ENDED. BECAUSE YOU HAD THAT THOUGHT DOESN'T MAKE YOU A BAD PERSON. THE MORE YOU BLAME YOUR SELF, THE HARDER IT WILL BE OPEN UP YOUR GRIEF, LET IT OUT, AND WORK THROUGH IT.

CAREGIVER/PARENT GRIEF CARD 2

QUESTION

I FEEL SO ASHAMED BECAUSE I BLAMED MY DAUGHTER FOR HAVING AIDS. NOW IT'S TOO LATE. WHAT CAN I DO?

ANSWER

WHEN SOMEONE WE LOVE DIES, WE TEND TO THINK OF ALL THE BAD THINGS WE DID TO THEM AND FORGET THE GOOD THINGS. ALL OF US HAVE DONE THINGS WE ARE ASHAMED OF. THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO CHANGE WHAT YOU SAID OR DID. BUT IT IS IMPORTANT TO MOVE ON. THE FIRST STEP IS TO ADMIT YOUR SHAME. THE SECOND STEP

IS TO EXPRESS HOW AWFUL YOU FEEL ABOUT HER DYING.

CAREGIVER/PARENT GRIEF CARD 3

QUESTION

I AM SO UPSET ABOUT THE MESS SHE LEFT ME IN THAT IT IS HARD TO FEEL GRIEF. HOW MUCH HARM DOES IT DO ME TO SKIP SHOWING FEELINGS OF SADNESS?

ANSWER

SOMETIMES IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO FEEL GRIEF UNTIL THE ANGER GETS OUT OF THE WAY. IF HER DEATH CREATED NEW RESPONSIBILITIES FOR YOU OR HAS MADE YOUR LIFE DIFFICULT, IT IS EXPECTED THAT YOU WOULD FEEL ANNOYED. FOR NOW, SOMEONE IN YOUR SITUATION WOULD FIND IT HELPFUL TO WORK ON GETTING PAST THE ANGER. YOU HAVE STARTED BY NOT HIDING IT. LET THE ANGRY THOUGHTS COME. DON'T TRY TO STOP THEM. BUT DON'T START GOING OVER THEM IN YOUR MIND. LET THE THOUGHT COME IN, RECOGNIZE IT, AND LET IT FLOAT AWAY WITHOUT COMMENT. IT WILL GRADUALLY WEAR ITSELF OUT.

CAREGIVER/PARENT GRIEF CARD 4

QUESTION

I MISS HER SO MUCH. WE WERE SO CLOSE. SHE WAS SUCH A SWEETHEART. I CAN'T IMAGINE LIVING WITHOUT HER.

ANSWER

SOMETIMES IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT A LOVED ONE HAS ACTUALLY DIED. WE CAN'T ACCEPT WHAT IS. WE DON'T SEE HOW WE CAN GO ON WITHOUT THAT PERSON. THESE FEELINGS ARE COMMON RIGHT AFTER THE PERSON HAS DIED. THEY GO AWAY LATER. GETTING SUPPORT FROM OTHERS, TALKING ABOUT THE LOVED ONE'S STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES, AND STAYING ACTIVE ALL HELP TIME PASS AND HEALING TO TAKE PLACE.

CAREGIVER/PARENT GRIEF CARD 5

QUESTION

I MISS MY HUSBAND/WIFE SO MUCH. EVEN THOUGH HE/SHE WAS NOT ALWAYS AROUND I MISS TALKING THINGS OUT WITH HIM/HER. I HAVE NO OTHER ADULT IN THE HOUSE TO TALK TO ABOUT THINGS GOING ON WITH THE KIDS.

ANSWER

MISSING A PARTNER WHO DIED IS VERY ROUGH. YOU ARE NOW LIKE A SINGLE PARENT HAVING TOTAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR CHILDREN. DON'T ISOLATE YOURSELF FROM OTHERS. LEARNING TO BALANCE ALL YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES IS HARD. IDENTIFY FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT CAN HELP YOU TO: 1) TALK ABOUT YOUR GRIEF; 2) TALK ABOUT PARENTING ISSUES; 3) GET FINANCIAL AND SOCIAL SERVICE SUPPORT; 4) FIND TIME FOR YOURSELF TO DO SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR YOURSELF. (REMEMBER: BEING *ALONE* DOES NOT ALWAYS MEAN BEING *LONELY*).

CAREGIVER/PARENT GRIEF CARD 6

QUESTION

SO MANY FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE PASSED AWAY IN THE LAST FEW YEARS. WHY AM I STILL AROUND, WHY DO I HAVE TO BEAR THESE BURDENS?

ANSWER

"WHY ME"? IS A QUESTION MANY PEOPLE ASK THEMSELVES AFTER THEY HAVE LOST ONE OR MORE LOVED ONES. IT'S THE NATURAL THING TO DO. REMEMBER: YOU ARE NOT BEING PUNISHED. THE DEATH OF YOUR LOVED ONES IS NOT YOUR FAULT. SEEK OUT FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ABOUT EACH PERSON WHO HAS DIED. TRY AND THINK OF EACH PERSON AS AN INDIVIDUAL WITHOUT CLUMPING EVERYONE TOGETHER. TALK TO OTHERS ABOUT THE GOOD MEMORIES AND NOT SO GOOD MEMORIES OF EACH PERSON.

CAREGIVER/PARENT GRIEF CARD 7

QUESTION

WHEN I SEE MY TEEN CRY OR GET ANGRY ABOUT THE DEATH IT MAKES ME FEEL SO UPSET THAT I REALLY DON'T WANT TO WATCH THIS. I WANT TO BE SUPPORTIVE BUT IT IS TOO HARD ON ME. WHAT CAN I DO?

ANSWER

WHEN YOU SEE ANOTHER PERSON'S GRIEF IT IS VERY NATURAL FOR YOU TO FEEL YOUR OWN GRIEF. BEING SUPPORTIVE TO YOUR TEEN DOES NOT MEAN BEING STRONG ALL THE TIME AND NEVER SHARING YOUR OWN PAIN. SHARING YOUR GRIEF WITH YOUR TEEN GIVES THEM A MODEL TO FOLLOW. IT HELPS THEM SEE THAT SHOWING AND TALKING ABOUT FEELINGS CAN BE COMFORTING TO BOTH OF YOU. GRIEF IS WORKED THROUGH WHEN LOVED ONES TALK TO EACH OTHER ABOUT THEIR UNCOMFORTABLE FEELINGS.

Exercise 4: Guidelines for Grieving
(10 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise is to inform participants about guidelines that may be helpful in dealing with grief. A handout of guidelines is used.]

Of all the things we have we discussed so far, what is going to be most helpful to you and why?

#ENCOURAGE SHARING OF TWO OR THREE IDEAS. REINFORCE HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS.

If I were to make a list of suggestions from all the things we talked about today, this set of suggestions by Earl Grollman, an expert on grieving - would be a good place to start.

#HAND OUT THE GUIDELINES.

GUIDELINES FOR GRIEVING

ACCEPT YOUR GRIEF.

ACCEPT YOUR FEELINGS.

BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF.

AVOID THE ABUSE OF ALCOHOL AND DRUGS.

SHARE YOUR PAIN WITH FRIENDS.

JOIN A GROUP OF OTHERS WHO ARE GRIEVING.

IF YOU ARE RELIGIOUS, SEEK HELP FROM YOUR FAITH.

HELP OTHERS.

DO WHAT HAS TO BE DONE, BUT DELAY MAJOR DECISIONS.

SET A GOAL TO LIVE AGAIN.

(Modified from Earl Grollman [1990] Talking about Death, Boston: Beacon Press)

**#GO OVER THE GUIDELINES QUICKLY MAKING BRIEF
COMMENTS ON THE POINTS.**

"Accept your grief" means to expect the physical and emotional pain that comes from the death of your loved one.

"Accept your feelings" says don't hide your misery - cry when you have to and don't be afraid to cry with others.

"Be patient with yourself" because your mind, body, and spirit need time to heal.

"Avoid the use of alcohol and drugs" because they prevent normal grief from occurring and are hard on your system.

"Share your pain with friends" is good advice because friends can be very supportive. Sharing your inner self is a gift them - one they will treasure.

"Joining a group of others who are grieving" can help you from feeling all alone and can bring you into contact with people who better understand what you are going through.

"If you are religious, seek help from your faith" because since the beginning of time people have been helped by their spiritual beliefs and practices at the time of death.

"Helping others" can help you face your loss and help you feel good about yourself.

"Do what has to be done, but delay major decisions" because you need time to get yourself together. Doing small things restores your confidence.

"Set a goal to live again" means don't give up. Hold on to hope.

You will live through this death and grieving in time.

Now I want us to get to know each other better and to know better the parents who died.

Exercise 5: Who Are the People Here?
(20 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are to build group cohesion and to begin the grieving process in the group. Introductions were delayed until this point so that participants would feel more comfortable talking about themselves and their deceased love one. Introductions which describe the participants and the deceased are used.]

There are three steps that I would like you to follow in introducing yourself.

First, tell us your name.

What do you want to be called in here?

Second, tell us three words that best describe you.

And, third, tell us three words that best describe the person who died.

For example, "My name is Gloria. The three words that describe me are caring, funny, and sad. My mother was loving, worried, and very thin."

Let's go around the room and have everyone tell us those three things.

#GO AROUND THE ROOM HAVING EACH PERSON GIVE HER OR HIS NAME, THREE WORDS THAT DESCRIBE HIM OR HER, AND THREE WORDS THAT DESCRIBE THE PERSON WHO DIED. PROMPT AS NECESSARY. PROMPTS MIGHT INCLUDE "WHAT WAS HER PERSONALITY LIKE?" "WHAT DID SHE LOOK LIKE?" "WHAT DID SHE LIKE TO DO?"

That was very good! Thank you.

It is time to break up in smaller groups.

The youths will work on identifying how they feel and the parents and caregivers will address their own worries about what to do.

#HAVE THE YOUTHS AND CAREGIVERS/PARENTS MOVE TO SEPARATE ROOMS.

Exercise 6a: What Am I Feeling? Part I, Sadness (YOUTHS ALONE)
(25 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 CARETAKERS 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.

Now we want to give you a chance in a safe setting to explore those feelings.

First, I would like everyone to tell the group what his or her favorite song is.

#HAVE EACH YOUTH NAME HIS OR HER FAVORITE SONG.

What feelings are expressed in that song?

#HAVE THE YOUTHS IDENTIFY THE FEELINGS IN THE SONG.

You know what feelings are and can find them in songs, videos, stories, and in people's expressions.

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.

Here are some statements on sadness.

In future sessions we will focus on other feelings that youths who have lost a parent usually have - anger and guilt.

Please answer the indicate what your reactions to sadness are.

No one but you will see how you respond.

#HAND OUT "LOOKING AT SADNESS" AND PENCILS. ALLOW THREE MINUTES TO FILL OUT THE QUESTIONNAIRE.

LOOKING AT SADNESS

Sadness is the most important feeling we have when someone special to us dies. We are sad because we miss that person so much. Sometime we think that we could never be happy again without that person in our lives.

It hurts a lot to feel sad, but when we share those feelings with someone else and we cry we usually feel a little bit better. At some point we will feel a lot better. We will feel happy again. But for awhile we feel sad a lot. That's the way it is when someone special dies.

Instructions: Check the statements that best fits you.

1. I feel sad after my mother's (father's) death..... most of the time___, some of the time___, almost never___.
2. When I feel sad, it..... really hurts a lot___, hurts only a little bit___, feels kind of numb___
3. When I feel sad, people..... listen to me___, ignore me___, tell me not to be sad___.
4. When I feel sad..... I know it is normal___, I think it is wrong___.
5. When I feel sad..... I let myself cry___, I keep myself from crying___, some of both___.
6. Many people have certain times when they feel really sad. Which times are this way for you?

At night before I go to sleep___

When I come home from school___

At meal time___

On weekends___

Other times___ Like when? _____

7. I feel sad because_____

THE END

I want you to get into groups of three and share with each other what it has been like for you to feel sad over your mother's or father's death.

Don't think that you have to share more than you want to.

#BREAK THE GROUP INTO THREES AND ALLOW THEM FIVE MINUTES TO SHARE FEELINGS OF AND THOUGHTS ABOUT SADNESS.

How did that go?

#ENCOURAGE COMMENTS ABOUT THE PROCESS. COMMENT ON SUGGESTIONS WHICH WILL MAKE THE EXPLORATION AND SHARING BOTH EASIER AND MORE FRUITFUL.

#BRING EVERYONE BACK TOGETHER.

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

#HOLD UP A CHART OF THE FEELING THERMOMETER.

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

Did it bother you to talk about your feelings today?

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.

It is time to go back with the caregivers and parents.

We will set some goals for the next session.

#BRING THE YOUTHS AND CAREGIVERS/PARENTS BACK TOGETHER. HAVE THEM SIT IN FAMILY GROUPS.

CAREGIVERS/PARENTS ALONE

Exercise 6b: What Am I Feeling and What Is Difficult?
(25 minutes)

[The purposes of this exercise are for caregivers to identify how they are feeling and to express those feelings, and to support them in dealing with the death and handling their new roles. Small group sharing is used. NOTE: YOUTHS AND CARE GIVERS ARE SEPARATED ON THIS EXERCISE]

You are all at different places because of

1. how close you were to the person who died.
2. how much you were already acting as a parent before the person died.
3. and what your relationship with the children was like before the person died.

Those of you who were close 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.

First, I want everyone here to tell us a little bit about your relationship with the parent who died.

Were you close?

Have you been helping that person before she or he died?

Make any comments you want to about the relationship.

#ENCOURAGE EACH CARETAKER OR PARENT TO BRIEFLY DESCRIBE HIS OR HER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PERSON WHO DIED.

Thank you for sharing.

Think back to when you learned of the parent's death.

What kinds of feelings did you experience and where are you now?

#ENCOURAGE SHARING. GIVE OUT "THANKS." IF SOMEONE BEGINS TO CRY OR SHOW SIGNS OF BEING UPSET, BE APPROPRIATELY GIVING: HAND THEM A BOX OF KLEENEX, THANK THEM FOR SHOWING HOW THEY FEEL, GIVE THEM A "THANKS," OR TOUCH THEM ON THE SHOULDER.

That was greatly appreciated.

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

Maybe the members of this group can help each other.

I want to go around the group and ask all of you to answer a question.

The question is "What is most difficult for me now?"

#GO AROUND THE ROOM OBTAINING ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION "WHAT IS MOST DIFFICULT FOR ME NOW?" RECORD KEY WORDS ON NEWSPRINT.

You can see that many of the difficulties are ones that others face also.

What do you think of this list?

#ENCOURAGE REACTIONS AND DISCUSSION.

Now let's answer a second question.

That question is "What helps me most?"

#GO AROUND THE ROOM AND HAVE EACH PERSON DESCRIBE WHAT HELPS HER OR HIM THE MOST. PUT KEY WORDS ON NEWSPRINT.

Those are some good ideas.

Do you have any other ideas about things that have been helpful to you?

#ENCOURAGE SHARING.

What do you think of the list describing what helps?

#ENCOURAGE REACTIONS AND DISCUSSION.

In an upcoming session we will go into ways of helping both teenagers and small children get through the death of a parent.

Now it is time to meet with the youths again, and to set some goals for next week.

#BRING THE YOUTHS AND CAREGIVERS/PARENTS BACK TOGETHER.

Exercise 7: What Is My Goal For Between Sessions?
(10 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.

If someone said that he was going to buy a \$50,000 statue to put at his mother's grave, that might be unrealistic.

To feel better next week is unclear.

To go to the grave 5 times each day for the next week is too much.

If someone's goal was to express their feelings it would be hard to know whether or not they had done it successfully.

On the other hand to look at all the pictures in two family photo albums between sessions would be a goal that met the guidelines.

Today we have worked on 1) accepting grieving as a normal process when someone close to you dies, 2) remembering the person who died, 3). identifying and expressing feelings, and 4) finding out what is helpful.

What might be some goals related to those topics that you could work on during the week?

Here are a few examples:

1. writing a letter to my mother telling her what I regret.

2. talking with a friend about how I feel.
3. talking about mom (or dad) at the dinner table with the family 5 nights between sessions.
4. give me a break from being caregiver by having a relative come over while I go out with a friend for the evening.

You can set goals for the family group together, for individuals, or you could one of each.

Please get together and decide what goals you are willing to achieve between now and when we meet again.

#ALLOW A FEW MINUTES TO SELECT GOALS.

Now let's go around the room and hear what you have chosen.

#ASK EACH PERSON AND FAMILY GROUP FOR GOALS. HELP THEM MEET THE GUIDELINES BY CONSULTING AND PROMPTING. ENGAGE OTHER GROUP MEMBERS TO ENCOURAGE WORKING TOGETHER. WRITE THE GOALS ON THE GOAL SUMMARY SHEET (IN HANDOUTS)

Those are a good set of goals.

To help you remember and work on your goal, I would like you to write your goals on a goal card and keep it with you during the week.

#PASS OUT GOAL CARDS - BLANK INDEX CARDS.

Each week you can add a new goal to the goal card.

We will begin next week's session with a review of the goals.

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 what ever what 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.

Youths are going to meet separately from caregivers for the afternoon and talk about their values and what they want for the future.

Caregivers are going to talk about adolescence.

END OF SESSION 3 - ADJUSTMENT PHASE

THAT'S IT

LEWIS: What's happening?

JAMIE: Nothing.

LEWIS: How you been?

JAMIE: Fine.

LEWIS: I haven't seen you for about a month.

JAMIE: That's about it.

LEWIS: You didn't go away, did you?

JAMIE: No, I've been right here.

LEWIS: You must have been hiding.

JAMIE: No. I always keep a low profile.

LEWIS: I just thought that afterwards..... afterwards, you might have gone some place.

JAMIE: Are you playing basketball this year?

LEWIS: If I get my grades up. What about you?

JAMIE: I'm thinking about it.

LEWIS: It might be good for you to play. Keep your mind off your mother dying like that.

JAMIE: How'd you know my mother died?

LEWIS: Get real, Jamie. Everybody knows your mother died.

JAMIE: She was sick.

LEWIS: Is it true she had AIDS?

JAMIE: Does everybody know that too?

LEWIS: A lot of people do. You act like that bothers you.

JAMIE: I don't know any more what bothers me. I guess I feel kind of ashamed, and then I feel guilty

for feeling ashamed.

LEWIS: There's nothing wrong with that. I know.

JAMIE: Don't tell me you know how I feel. I hate that. Nobody knows how I feel.

LEWIS: I wasn't going to say that. My mom died of AIDS a couple of years ago. Before I met you. I wasn't at the hospital when she died. We didn't get along too well. We'd just had a big fight. Afterwards, I was really sorry I had been mean to her. I still am.

JAMIE: Did you ever think you were going crazy? I keep hearing my mom in the apartment. I think she's calling me. I catch myself talking to her. It's weird.

LEWIS: You're not going crazy. That happens to a lot of people. When your mom is dead, everything changes. Your family will never be the same again. You will never be the same again. I had so many feelings, and they all hurt. I was pissed. I was scared. I was so sad. The hurting was terrible.

JAMIE: How could you be sad if you didn't like her?

LEWIS: I can't explain it. Don't try to figure things out, Jamie. Just let how you feel come out. I'll tell you - no matter what the guys say - you got to cry. Put your head in your pillow and cry your heart out. Cry until no more tears come.

JAMIE: I cried a little.

LEWIS: It hasn't been that long since she died. There's got to be more tears.

JAMIE: I guess so. I can't believe she's dead. This is all unreal. It can't be happening to me. I want to call out to her, "Mom, mom, come back. Come back. don't leave me alone."

THE END

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 1

QUESTION

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO FEEL BETTER AFTER A PARENT HAS DIED?

ANSWER

IT TAKES A LONG TIME TO FEEL BETTER. MANY PEOPLE GRIEVE FOR A YEAR OR LONGER. THERE ARE UPS AND DOWNS, BUT AS TIME GOES ON, THE PERIODS OF FEELING OK LAST LONGER. CHILDREN MAY NEED MORE TIME THAN A SURVIVING PARENT OR CAREGIVER.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 2

QUESTION

EVER SINCE MY MOTHER DIED I HAVE FELT ANGRY. IS IT WRONG TO FEEL ANGRY?

ANSWER

NO, IT IS NOT WRONG TO FEEL ANGER. ANGER IS ONE OF THE FEELINGS THAT PEOPLE EXPERIENCE WHEN THEY ARE GRIEVING OVER THE LOSS OF A PARENT. ANYONE IN THE FAMILY CAN HAVE SUCH A FEELING.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 3

QUESTION

MY MOTHER AND I NEVER GOT ON WELL. ONE DAY WE HAD A BIG FIGHT, AND I TOLD HER TO GET OUT OF MY LIFE. TWO WEEKS LATER SHE DIED. I WONDER IF SHE GAVE UP ON LIVING AFTER OUR FIGHT. IS IT TRUE THAT HER DEATH WAS MY FAULT?

ANSWER

YOUR MOTHER DIED OF AIDS. SHE WOULD HAVE DIED NO MATTER HOW YOU TREATED HER. YOU DID NOT CAUSE HER DEATH. ALL HUMAN BEINGS REGRET THAT THEY DID CERTAIN THINGS IN THEIR LIVES.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 4

QUESTION

I FEEL LIKE GOING INTO MY ROOM AND BEING ALONE. I DON'T WANT ANYONE AROUND WHEN I FEEL VERY SAD. IS THIS NORMAL?

ANSWER

ANYONE CLOSE TO YOUR MOTHER CAN FEEL SAD OVER HER DEATH. SOME PEOPLE PREFER TO BE SAD WHERE THERE ARE OTHER PEOPLE FOR COMFORT. OTHERS, LIKE YOURSELF, WANT TO FEEL SAD IN PRIVATE. FEELING SAD IS NORMAL, AND THERE IS NO ONE RIGHT WAY TO FEEL IT.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 5

QUESTION

WHY DO CHILDREN FEEL AFRAID WHEN A PARENT DIES?

ANSWER

MOST OF A CHILD'S FEARS WHEN A PARENT HAS DIED COMES FROM FEELING SO SMALL AND POWERLESS. OF COURSE, CHILDREN FEAR CHANGES IN THEIR LIVES. BUT ON TOP OF THAT FEAR ARE TWO OTHER IMPORTANT ONES: THE FEAR THAT SOMEONE ELSE CLOSE MIGHT DIE AND THE FEAR THAT THEY THEMSELVES MIGHT DIE.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 6

QUESTION

HOW IS DEATH DIFFERENT THAN OTHER KINDS OF LOSS?

ANSWER

WITH DEATH IT SEEMS LIKE THERE ARE NO NEW BEGINNINGS - ONLY A VERY SAD ENDING. IT IS THE HARDEST LOSS OF ALL, AND NOTHING HAS PREPARED YOU FOR IT.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 7

QUESTION

WHEN YOUR MOTHER DIES, DO YOU LOSE ONLY YOUR MOTHER?

ANSWER

NO. DEATH BRINGS MANY OTHER LOSSES. 1) LOSS OF TRUST - IT COULD HAPPEN TO YOU OR SOME OTHER LOVED ONE. 2) LOSS OF SECURITY - WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOU NOW? 3) LOSS OF FAITH - HOW COULD GOD ALLOW THIS? 4) LOSS OF DREAMS - LIFE WILL NEVER BE THE SAME. 5) LOSS OF SELF - WHO AM I WITHOUT HER? 6) LOSS OF PURPOSE - THE ROAD AHEAD IS SO UNCERTAIN.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 8

QUESTION

IS GRIEF A DISEASE OR A SIGN OF WEAKNESS?

ANSWER

NEITHER. GRIEF IS NOT A DISEASE NOR A SIGN OF WEAKNESS. GRIEF IS SOMETHING YOU HAVE TO GO THROUGH TO GET RID OF IT. THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANY WAY TO GET BEYOND GRIEF BUT TO GO THROUGH IT. THAT'S WHY WE ARE DOING THIS TODAY.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 9

QUESTION

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I KEEP MY GRIEF BURIED?

ANSWER

BURYING YOUR GRIEF WILL KEEP YOU FROM MOVING PAST THE FEELING OF LOSS AND GETTING ON WITH YOUR LIFE. THE CHANCES ARE GOOD THAT SOME DAY THAT BURIED GRIEF WILL EXPLODE AND DO YOU A GREAT DEAL OF DAMAGE.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 10

QUESTION

MY MOTHER JUST DIED. ARE THERE SOME FEELINGS I SHOULDN'T HAVE?

ANSWER

IT IS OK TO FEEL DAZED, DISBELIEF, ANGER, ENVY, PANIC, RELIEF, AND LONELINESS. IT IS ALSO OK IF YOU DON'T HAVE SOME OF THOSE FEELINGS. SOMETIMES YOU MAY NOT BE SURE HOW YOU FEEL. GIVE YOURSELF PERMISSION TO FEEL THE WAY YOU ARE FEELING RIGHT NOW. FEELINGS KEEP CHANGING.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 11

QUESTION

SINCE MY MOM DIED I HAVE HAD SPLITTING HEADACHES AND FELT LIKE I WANTED TO VOMIT. ISN'T THAT ABNORMAL?

ANSWER

WHEN YOU ARE GRIEVING, YOU BECOME MORE VULNERABLE TO PHYSICAL COMPLAINTS AND ILLNESSES. IT'S YOUR BODY'S REACTION TO THE TRAGEDY IN YOUR LIFE. IT IS NOT UNCOMMON TO FEEL TIRED ALL THE TIME, BE UNABLE TO FALL ASLEEP, TO LOSE YOUR APPETITE, FEEL LIKE VOMITING, HAVE HEADACHES, FEEL DIZZY, HAVE A CHOKING SENSATION, OR FIND IT HARD TO BREATHE. DON'T THINK YOU ARE IMAGINING THE PAIN. IT IS REAL. AS TIME PASSES, THESE PHYSICAL PAINS WILL GET LESS AND GO AWAY.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 12

QUESTION

RECENTLY I CALLED HOME AND ASKED TO SPEAK TO MY MOM. SHE'S DEAD! AM I GOING CRAZY?

ANSWER

YOU ARE NOT LOSING IT. THINGS LIKE YOU DESCRIBE HAPPEN TO PEOPLE WHO ARE GRIEVING. YOU MAY GET LOST ON YOUR WAY TO SCHOOL, HEAR VOICES, TALK OUT LOUD TO YOUR MOM, TRY TO CALL HER, SEE HER WALKING IN THE MALL, FORGET YOUR NAME, AND DO OTHER THINGS THAT SEEM STRANGE. THESE ACTIONS ARE TEMPORARY AND WILL GO AWAY AS TIME PASSES.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 13

QUESTION

MY MOTHER WAS A SINGLE PARENT FOR YEARS. NOW SHE IS DEAD. ISN'T IT HARDER FOR A TEENAGER WHO HAS LOST BOTH PARENTS?

ANSWER

NO ONE CAN SAY THAT THE PAIN YOU FEEL IS STRONGER THAN THE PAIN ANOTHER TEENAGER FEELS. BUT HAVING LOST BOTH PARENTS CAN CREATE MORE PROBLEMS TO OVERCOME. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DECISIONS THAT PEOPLE WANT TO MAKE FOR YOU. YOU NEED TO HAVE YOUR SAY.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 14

QUESTION

MY FATHER DIDN'T LIVE WITH US, BUT HE HAS BEEN CLOSE BY. I THINK HE STILL LOVED MY MOTHER WHO JUST DIED OF AIDS. I LIVE WITH HIM NOW. IT IS UPSETTING TO SEE HIM OPENLY CRYING OVER HER DEATH. SHOULDN'T HE BE TRYING TO CONTROL HIMSELF?

ANSWER

THERE IS NO NEED TO BE AFRAID WHEN YOUR FATHER FEELS REAL BAD. HIS REACTION IS TO BE EXPECTED WHEN A HUSBAND LOSES A WIFE. IT MIGHT HELP BOTH OF YOU IF YOU AND YOUR FATHER TALKED ABOUT HOW THE TWO OF YOU FEEL.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 15

QUESTION

MY GRANDMOTHER IS TAKING CARE OF ME AND MY LITTLE SISTERS NOW THAT MY MOTHER DIED. WE ALL FEEL REALLY SAD. WHAT CAN WE DO?

ANSWER

THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS THAT YOU, YOUR GRANDMOTHER, AND YOUR LITTLE SISTERS CAN DO ARE 1) TO TALK ABOUT YOUR MOTHER. TALK ABOUT GOOD TIMES AND BAD. 2) SHARE FEELINGS EVEN WHEN THEY HURT. IT'S OK TO CRY TOGETHER. THAT HELPS TOO.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 16

QUESTION

I KNOW IN MY MIND THAT MY MOTHER IS DEAD. I SAY THAT SHE IS DEAD. I HEAR THE WORDS, BUT I DON'T BELIEVE IT. IS THAT WRONG?

ANSWER

SOMETIMES IT IS HARD TO ACCEPT HER DEATH AS FINAL. THAT'S NOT WRONG. IT JUST MAKES IT MORE DIFFICULT TO GET YOUR LIFE TOGETHER AND MOVE ON. TRY THINKING OF THINGS YOU COULD DO TO HELP YOURSELF TO ACCEPT THE REALITY. FOR EXAMPLE, THINGS LIKE GOING TO HER GRAVE, AND, WHEN YOU ARE READY, PUTTING MOST OF HER THINGS AWAY.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 17

QUESTION

I DID NOT LIKE MY MOTHER AT ALL AND TO BE HONEST I WANTED HER DEAD. I GUESS THAT MEANS THERE IS NOTHING TO GRIEVE ABOUT. IS THAT CORRECT?

ANSWER

WHEN YOU FEEL MOSTLY ANGER AND GUILT AND VERY LITTLE SADNESS, GRIEVING CAN BE MUCH MORE DIFFICULT TO GET THROUGH. GRIEVING IS STILL POSSIBLE, PARTICULARLY IF YOU CAN ACCEPT THE IDEA THAT IT IS OKAY TO HAVE WANTED HER DEAD AND TO TALK ABOUT IT. IF YOU CAN DO THAT, LATER ON YOU MAY BE ABLE TO SEE A WAY TO LET GO OF YOUR DISLIKE OF HER AND FORGIVE HER.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 18

QUESTION

MY MOTHER DIED YESTERDAY. WE KNEW ALL WEEK THAT SHE WOULD DIE SOON. I AM HELPING TAKE CARE OF MY LITTLE BROTHER AND SISTER, AND I WANT TO KNOW IF THEY SHOULD COME TO THE FUNERAL.

ANSWER

IF THEY CAN SIT THROUGH THE CEREMONY, IT IS A GOOD IDEA TO LET THEM HAVE THE CHANCE TO SAY GOOD-BYE. IT WILL HELP THEM GET OVER THE SHOCK OF THEIR MOTHER'S DEATH.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 19

QUESTION

MY MOTHER DIED RECENTLY, AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO TELL MY 6 YEAR OLD SISTER. SHOULD I SAY THAT MOM WENT AWAY ON A LONG TRIP OR THAT SHE DIED BECAUSE SHE WAS SICK?

ANSWER

IF YOU SAY THAT YOUR MOM WENT AWAY, YOUR SISTER WILL KEEP WAITING FOR HER TO COME BACK AND WILL BE UPSET OVER THE FACT THAT YOUR MOM DIDN'T SAY GOODBYE OR EVEN SAY SHE WAS LEAVING. IF YOU SAY SHE DIED BECAUSE SHE WAS SICK, EVERY TIME SOMEONE IN THE FAMILY IS SICK, YOUR SISTER WILL THINK THAT PERSON IS GOING TO DIE. IN A SIMPLE WAY EXPLAIN WHAT BEING DEAD IS AND INDICATE THAT YOUR MOTHER IS DEAD. USE EXAMPLES FROM NATURE - DEAD ANIMALS AND TREES. ALSO THERE ARE SOME GOOD BOOKS ON DEATH THAT WILL HELP YOU TALK TO YOUR SISTER.

ONE BOOK IS STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT DEATH FOR TEENAGERS BY EARL A. GROLLMAN.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 20

QUESTION

I WAS NEVER MUCH INTO BEING SPIRITUAL BEFORE MY MOTHER'S DEATH. NOW I LOOK AT LIFE DIFFERENTLY AND HAVE MANY QUESTIONS. CAN RELIGION HELP ME?

ANSWER

MOST RELIGIONS DEAL WITH DEATH AND HAVE BEEN HELPFUL TO PEOPLE IN DEALING WITH THEIR SADNESS. IT CAN HELP PEOPLE UNDERSTAND WHAT LIFE IS ALL ABOUT AND HOW DEATH IS A NATURAL PART OF OUR LIVES. RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES THAT BRING A SENSE OF BELONGING, COMFORT, HOPE, PEACE, AND WISDOM HAVE MUCH TO OFFER A GRIEVING PERSON.

YOUTH GRIEF CARD 21

QUESTION

MY FATHER'S BIRTHDAY WAS LAST WEEK AND I FELT REALLY SAD. I THOUGHT I WAS OVER IT. WHEN DO I GET OVER IT?

ANSWER

MOST PEOPLE FIND THAT THEY ARE REMINDED ABOUT THE PERSON THEY LOST ON HOLIDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES, LIKE THEIR BIRTHDAY. MANY PEOPLE ALSO HAVE FEELINGS OF GRIEF AT SPECIAL EVENTS, SUCH AS HIGH SCHOOL OR COLLEGE GRADUATION OR THEIR WEDDINGS. EVEN THOUGH YOU ARE GOING TO FEEL BETTER AS TIME GOES BY, THERE ARE STILL GOING TO BE EVENTS OVER YOUR LIFE THAT REMIND YOU OF THE PERSON YOU LOST, AND THIS IS NORMAL.

CAREGIVER/PARENT GRIEF CARD 1

QUESTION

I HATED TO SEE HER IN SO MUCH PAIN. THERE WERE DAYS WHEN I HOPED SHE WOULD DIE. I LOVED HER. HOW COULD I HAVE HAD SUCH A TERRIBLE WISH?

ANSWER

IT IS NATURAL TO WANT TO SEE SUFFERING ENDED. BECAUSE YOU HAD THAT THOUGHT DOESN'T MAKE YOU A BAD PERSON. THE MORE YOU BLAME YOUR SELF, THE HARDER IT WILL BE OPEN UP YOUR GRIEF, LET IT OUT, AND WORK THROUGH IT.

CAREGIVER/PARENT GRIEF CARD 2

QUESTION

I FEEL SO ASHAMED BECAUSE I BLAMED MY DAUGHTER FOR HAVING AIDS. NOW IT'S TOO LATE. WHAT CAN I DO?

ANSWER

WHEN SOMEONE WE LOVE DIES, WE TEND TO THINK OF ALL THE BAD THINGS WE DID TO THEM AND FORGET THE GOOD THINGS. ALL OF US HAVE DONE THINGS WE ARE ASHAMED OF. THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO CHANGE WHAT YOU SAID OR DID. BUT IT IS IMPORTANT TO MOVE ON. THE FIRST STEP IS TO ADMIT YOUR SHAME. THE SECOND STEP IS TO EXPRESS HOW AWFUL YOU FEEL ABOUT HER DYING.

CAREGIVER/PARENT GRIEF CARD 3

QUESTION

I AM SO UPSET ABOUT THE MESS SHE LEFT ME IN THAT IT IS HARD TO FEEL GRIEF. HOW MUCH HARM DOES IT DO ME TO SKIP SHOWING FEELINGS OF SADNESS?

ANSWER

SOMETIMES IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO FEEL GRIEF UNTIL THE ANGER GETS OUT OF THE WAY. IF HER DEATH CREATED NEW RESPONSIBILITIES FOR YOU OR HAS MADE YOUR LIFE DIFFICULT, IT IS EXPECTED THAT YOU WOULD FEEL ANNOYED. FOR NOW, SOMEONE IN YOUR SITUATION WOULD FIND IT HELPFUL TO WORK ON GETTING PAST THE ANGER. YOU HAVE STARTED BY NOT HIDING IT. LET THE ANGRY THOUGHTS COME. DON'T TRY TO STOP THEM. BUT DON'T START GOING OVER THEM IN YOUR MIND. LET THE THOUGHT COME IN, RECOGNIZE IT, AND LET IT FLOAT AWAY WITHOUT COMMENT. IT WILL GRADUALLY WEAR ITSELF OUT.

CAREGIVER/PARENT GRIEF CARD 4

QUESTION

I MISS HER SO MUCH. WE WERE SO CLOSE. SHE WAS SUCH A SWEETHEART. I CAN'T IMAGINE LIVING WITHOUT HER.

ANSWER

SOMETIMES IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE THAT A LOVED ONE HAS ACTUALLY DIED. WE CAN'T ACCEPT WHAT IS. WE DON'T SEE HOW WE CAN GO ON WITHOUT THAT PERSON. THESE FEELINGS ARE COMMON RIGHT AFTER THE PERSON HAS DIED. THEY GO AWAY LATER. GETTING SUPPORT FROM OTHERS, TALKING ABOUT THE LOVED ONE'S STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES, AND STAYING ACTIVE ALL HELP TIME PASS AND HEALING TO TAKE PLACE.

CAREGIVER/PARENT GRIEF CARD 5

QUESTION

I MISS MY HUSBAND/WIFE SO MUCH. EVEN THOUGH HE/SHE WAS NOT ALWAYS AROUND I MISS TALKING THINGS OUT WITH HIM/HER. I HAVE NO OTHER ADULT IN THE HOUSE TO TALK TO ABOUT THINGS GOING ON WITH THE KIDS.

ANSWER

YOU ARE NOW LIKE A SINGLE PARENT HAVING TOTAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR CHILDREN. DON'T ISOLATE YOURSELF FROM OTHERS. LEARNING TO BALANCE ALL YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES IS HARD. IDENTIFY FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND ORGANIZATIONS THAT CAN HELP YOU TO: 1) TALK ABOUT YOUR GRIEF; 2) TALK ABOUT PARENTING ISSUES; 3) GET FINANCIAL AND SOCIAL SERVICE SUPPORT; 4) FIND TIME FOR YOURSELF TO DO SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR YOURSELF. (REMEMBER: BEING *ALONE* DOES NOT ALWAYS MEAN BEING *LONELY*).

CAREGIVER/PARENT GRIEF CARD 6

QUESTION

SO MANY FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE PASSED AWAY IN THE LAST FEW YEARS. WHY AM I STILL AROUND, WHY DO I HAVE TO BEAR THESE BURDENS?

ANSWER

"WHY ME"? IS A QUESTION MANY PEOPLE ASK THEMSELVES AFTER THEY HAVE LOST ONE OR MORE LOVED ONES. REMEMBER: YOU ARE NOT BEING PUNISHED. THE DEATH OF YOUR LOVED ONES IS NOT YOUR FAULT. SEEK OUT FAMILY AND FRIENDS TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ABOUT EACH PERSON WHO HAS DIED. TRY AND THINK OF EACH PERSON AS AN INDIVIDUAL WITHOUT CLUMPING EVERYONE TOGETHER. TALK TO OTHERS ABOUT THE GOOD MEMORIES AND NOT SO GOOD MEMORIES OF EACH PERSON.

CAREGIVER/PARENT GRIEF CARD 7

QUESTION

WHEN I SEE MY TEEN CRY OR GET ANGRY ABOUT THE DEATH IT MAKES ME FEEL SO UPSET THAT I REALLY DON'T WANT TO WATCH THIS. I WANT TO BE SUPPORTIVE BUT IT IS TOO HARD ON ME. WHAT CAN I DO?

ANSWER

WHEN YOU SEE ANOTHER PERSON'S GREIF IT IS VERY NATURAL FOR YOU TO FEEL YOUR OWN GRIEF. BEING SUPPORTIVE TO YOUR TEEN DOES NOT MEAN BEING STRONG ALL THE TIME AND NEVER SHARING YOUR OWN PAIN. SHARING YOUR GREIF WITH YOUR TEEN GIVES THEM A MODEL TO FOLLOW. IT HELPS THEM SEE THAT SHOWING AND TALKING ABOUT FEELINGS CAN BE COMFORTING TO BOTH OF YOU. GRIEF IS WORKED THROUGH WHEN LOVED ONES TALK TO EACH OTHER ABOUT THEIR UNCOMFORTABLE FEELINGS.

GUIDELINES FOR GRIEVING

ACCEPT YOUR GRIEF.

ACCEPT YOUR FEELINGS.

BE PATIENT WITH YOURSELF.

AVOID THE ABUSE OF ALCOHOL AND DRUGS.

SHARE YOUR PAIN WITH FRIENDS.

JOIN A GROUP OF OTHERS WHO ARE GRIEVING.

IF YOU ARE RELIGIOUS, SEEK HELP FROM YOUR FAITH.

HELP OTHERS.

DO WHAT HAS TO BE DONE, BUT DELAY MAJOR DECISIONS.

SET A GOAL TO LIVE AGAIN.

(Modified from Earl Grollman [1990] Talking about Death, Boston: Beacon Press)

LOOKING AT SADNESS

Sadness is the most important feeling we have when someone special to us dies. We are sad because we miss that person so much. Sometime we think that we could never be happy again without that person in our lives.

It hurts a lot to feel sad, but when we share those feelings with someone else and we cry we usually feel a little bit better. At some point we will feel a lot better. We will feel happy again. But for awhile we feel sad a lot. That's the way it is when someone special dies.

Instructions: Check the statements that best fits you.

1. I feel sad after my parent's death.....most of the time ____, some of the time ____, almost never ____.
2. When I feel sad, it..... really hurts a lot ____, hurts only a little bit ____, feels kind of numb ____
3. When I feel sad, people..... listen to me ____. ignore me ____, tell me not to be sad ____.
4. When I feel sad..... I know it is normal ____, I think it is wrong ____.
5. When I feel sad..... I let myself cry ____, I keep myself from crying ____, some of both ____.
6. Many people have certain times whey they feel really sad. Which times are this way for you?

At night before I go to sleep ____

When I come home from school ____

At meal time ____

On weekends ____

Other times ____ Like when? _____

7. I feel sad because _____

GOAL SETTING CHART

GOALS SHOULD BE

REALISTIC

CLEAR

NOT TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE

EASY TO SEE IF COMPLETED

GOAL SUMMARY SHEET