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A Group Counseling Manual on Grief for High School Students

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A Group Counseling Manual on Grief for High School Students

A Project Presented to
The Graduate Faculty of
Minnesota State University Moorhead

By
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In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in
Counseling
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School Counseling

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Abstract

This paper examines the research literature surrounding high school aged adolescents (ages 14-18) and their experience with grief. It was found during this review that 4% of adolescents, living in western countries, lose a parent before the age of 18 years old (Andriessen, Mowll et al., 2018). This paper looks into the measurement process for grief and how it can be used in teen assessments. Most reports state self-surveys as the main type of assessment used. The treatment process of grief was also reviewed, and it was found that group counseling is favored when working with adolescents. Interventions and processes were found to be effective in most cases of group counseling (Grassetti et al., 2018). However, some models and treatments were deemed controversial because of the lack of mixing of genders and nationalities. Most self-referrals and surveys came from females and the studies often favored the United States of America (Andriessen et al., 2018). This report also takes initiative to develop a group manual for use with high school students who are experiencing grief due to the loss of a loved one. This has been done in an effort to provide school counselors with an easy to follow, effective group plan, to better the lives of those affected with grief and to help adolescent high schools come to terms with death, grief and their own emotions.

Keywords: Adolescents, teen(s), grief in adolescents, grief assessment

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Introduction

Grief is something that everyone experiences at some point in his or her life. Whether that grief is small or large, brought on by a failing grade or the death of a loved one, it is a feeling that all of the world can identify with. However, not everyone can identify that what they are feeling is called “grief”. Navigating high school (ages 14-18) is challenging enough, without the added weight of trying to figure out how to understand and deal with grief. Grief presents itself in different ways to each individual person. The first step to accurately understand grief, is to identify what it looks like to each person in the group. People feel the effects of grief at their own unique rate and time. Even the amount of grief that is felt can vary depending on who is feeling it. So, to be able to provide the correct supports for each group member a measurement of grief must be taken into account.

This group manual has been developed, in an effort, to help teens to better understand the concepts of death, grief and their own feelings and experiences when dealing with the two. In order to help members gain that understanding, they will be taken through a seven-session group process, where members will define their grief and feelings and also learn coping strategies. The goal of the group manual is to help teens recognize their emotions, gain knowledge and understanding about death and learn how to cope with grief.

Literature Review

Introduction

Grief is undefinable but how can this be? There is a definition in the dictionary, medical practices can diagnose depression as a result of grief, mental health professionals can even specialize in the topic, so how can it be undefinable? There is no one true definition for grief because everyone experiences grief in a different way. Some people show outward signs through tears, the color of clothing they wear, or a change in behavior, while others keep their display of grief hidden. In public they plaster a smile on their face, wave and remain cheerful to those around them but in private loneliness, sadness, or anger overtakes them. Research done by Schuurman (2002) shows that adults are more likely to share their emotions openly when it comes to grief, whereas adolescents, specifically high school aged students, tend to keep their feelings bottled inside. To be able to truly help high school adolescents explore and heal from grief, an effort must be made to understand not only grief but how it specifically affects those in an age bracket of 14 years to 18 years old. This literature review seeks to share information regarding grief and its effect(s) on adolescents. Firstly, a loose definition of grief will be discussed in an effort to give context to a universal but also individual experience. Other steps this document will take, will shed light onto how grief is measured, and it will also highlight the differences between how teens and adults handle grief, so as to gain more understanding of the process. Along with all of the above, research into group counseling for teens is included, as it has been found that group counseling has been the effective when working with high school students (Torbic, 2011). Details of treatment process and group counseling are contained within the research as well. Grief may not have a universal definition but with the help of this research it may become more understood, especially when working with adolescents of high school age.

What is Grief

Grief is difficult to define, as it is something that everyone experiences differently. Unfortunately, at some point in life everyone will come face to face with grief and be forced to create their own definition. A large portion of those treading the murky waters of grief are teenagers. As 1 in every 20 children will have a parent die before he or she graduates from high school (Torbic, 2011). So how can we define grief if every individual person has their own experience with it? Dr. Alan Wolfelt took the time to answer that question. To differentiate grief and mourning, which is defined as “the outward expression of grief”, Wolfelt stated that “Grief is the combination of internal thoughts and feelings we have when someone we love dies” (Torbic, 2011, p.68).

However, grief is not that simple. Mayo Clinic defines grief as “strong, sometimes overwhelming emotion”, such a vague definition gives room for people to add their own meaning to the phrase. The medical institute also states how grief is unique in that it is both a universal concept but also a personal experience (Mayo, 2016). There are stages of grief, but those stages can also overlap, mix together and become tangled. To come out of that grief, is to be able to untangle those thoughts, words and feelings and be able to give them individual meaning.

Whatever way someone decides to give meaning to their grief, it is important to know that the grieving process is a natural reaction to loss. Symptoms of grief are dependent on the situation and the person. According to the American Psychological Association, symptoms of grief include physiological distress, separation anxiety, confusion, dwelling on the past and apprehension of the future. These symptoms can also impact the way an individual defines grief. No two persons’ grief look exactly alike.

Measurement of Grief

How do we measure grief? Is it by how hard someone cries? Does a person have to be frowning or wear black to show that they are grieving? Grief is portrayed differently by everyone who feels it, so its measurement is not always the same either. The most common, effective way to measure grief has been through self-survey (Dalton, 2005). However, in her review, Andriessen, admits that some studies were found controversial due to the abundance of female participants and being almost solely based in the United States of America (Andriessen et al., 2018). One of the studies that Andriessen reviewed, had bereaved adolescents fill out surveys on depression, anxiety, stress, perceived social support and asked questions related to death and mental health. These factors were then used to calculate the level of grief the participants felt. Adolescent Grief Inventory (AGI) is a type of survey assessment tool that is commonly used to assess grief. It uses questions to gauge where participants are at within their grief. Interestingly, this study included 6 factors, which were not meant to be/represent stages of grief like the Kubler-Ross model. The survey is really meant to look at the emotions that the adolescent was feeling. The evidence suggested that those who experienced loss due to a suicide were more likely to practice self-blame, and feel more anger and betrayal (Andriessen et al., 2018).

Another measurement of grief was practiced during Dalton and Krout's (2005) research in their study involving group music therapy for bereaved teens. The study used music therapy, in a group setting, to help adolescents who had been affected by grief. In order to measure the starting level of grief that a participant was feeling, a self-statement questionnaire was administered. This questionnaire has been named the Grief Process Scale (GPS) and is made up of statement analysis from 123 song lyrics. This measurement tool was developed in order to

access the five grief process areas (understanding, feeling, remembering, integrating and growing). While this survey was given in a group setting, the results were individual and self-reported. Unsurprisingly, like previous research had stated there were more females present and self-reporting than males (Dalton, 2005). This study is important because of the effectiveness of its measurement tool in a group setting. Other measurements like the Jimerson Youth Common Grief Reaction Checklist, have been considered too time consuming to be used in a group setting, while surveys like the Expanded Texas Inventory of Grief (ETIG) use a 5- point Likert scale, limiting the participants expression of grief, therefore also marking as an ineffective way to measure an adolescent's grief (Dalton, 2005). One measurement tool that was validated was the Hogan Grief Reaction Checklist (HGRC). The length of this questionnaire was comparable to the GPS and easy to use in a group setting. There are a range of grief measurement tools that can be used when assessing grief, however not every tool is made for the job. Shorter self-surveys are better used in counseling groups, as well as questionnaires that allow for flexible answering.

Understanding Teens and Grief

Grief is a difficult topic to understand and navigate for any person. Being in the adolescent stage of life (10 years old to 19 years old) can potentially make it even more complicated. That is not to say that adolescents do not commonly interact with grief. According to Andriessen, Mowll et al., (2018), 4% of adolescents, living in western countries, lose a parent before the age of 18. The 2017 study looked directly at the United States and found the following statistics: an estimated 78% of adolescents lost a family member or close friend during their teenage years and 18% of those teenagers were exposed to death or loss through the completion of suicide (Andriessen, Mowll et al., 2018).

Grief can present itself in many ways as well. Physical signs are often, crying, headaches, difficulty sleeping, detachment, loss of appetite, isolation and more. Emotions attached to grief include frustration, guilt, anger and stress (Gregory, 2020). What is the best way to help a population that is so affected by grief? Assessment is the first step first step to gathering the information necessary to better understand the effects of grief. This assessment is can then be used to provide recommendations, and if necessary, move ahead with appropriate support (Rabenstein, 2018).

The way that grief presents itself is not the only varying factor when it comes to how teens handle loss. Different types of death can impact teens in a variety of ways. Doctor of Education, Donna Schuurman, highlights ten kinds of death, how those deaths can impact the lives of teens and even how to properly address the situation. The 10 types of death are as follows, Death of a Friend, Death of a Parent, Death of a Sibling, Violent Death, Death by Suicide, Multiple Deaths, Death from Aids, Death from Chronic Illness, Accidental Death, and When a Teen Witnesses Death (Schuurman, 2002).

Schuurman describes how each form of death can cause different emotional and physical reactions. When the death of a friend occurs, the teen may be more concerned with the loss of friendship and future plans (like going to prom or graduating together), while a student who experiences the death of a parent may worry about their remaining parent and siblings, rather than their own thoughts or feelings (Schuurman, 2002).

Research in Support of Group Counseling

Understanding grief is only the first step in helping adolescents on the path to healing. Research can lay out methods of measurement and conduct surveys to discern how grief

specifically impacts teens but all that does little good, if there is not a way to actually start the healing process. In her research on childhood grief and loss, Aime Ferow (2019) found that both individual and group therapies were effective in treating grieving adolescents. Teenagers tend to hide their emotions and pull away from society when experiencing grief. By being involved in a group of people who share similarities with grief, it allows the participants to work on coping with grief and build social skills. “Peer support groups are one of the best ways to help bereaved teens heal”, according to Dr. Alan Wolfelt, “In a group, teens can connect with other teens who share the commonality of the experience” (Wolfelt, 2013, p.22). As teens go through a group session, they are encouraged to tell their story. This allows for them to be able to acknowledge death/loss and the fact that their life is now changed forever. Having an open dialog within group sessions can help to develop social skills that teens may be lacking due to the losses they have endured and potential depression overtaking everyday life. “Therapy that focuses on social skills training and relaxation aids in reducing depressive symptoms” (Ferow, 2019, p.6). Information like this provides evidence that group therapy is effective in diminishing depression symptoms because it forms relationships with others and helps participants to develop socially.

Group therapy is not only used for social growth, it also provides a safe place for someone to expression his or her emotions and find a sense of normalcy as they learn that they are not alone in their experiences. “Establishing a common space or environment between the group members eventually results in sense of empathy among them” (Roubenzadeh, 2012, p.2134). Group therapy has the ability to create bonds between group members, as they work together to walk through their individual storms of grief. A common form of group therapy is Play Therapy. In his 2012 research article on sand tray short term group therapy, Roubenzadeh found that when play therapy is carried out in the form of group therapy people with the same

problems are better able to understand each other's circumstances and therefore more effective when it comes to helping each other. The results of Roubenzadeh's study showed that after participating in group therapy sessions, the group members reported a reduction in feelings of guilt, rejection and depression (Roubenzadeh, 2012). There is evidence that using psychoeducation in a group setting can help participants to "redefine who they are in the aftermath of the loss, and to become empowered" (Ferow, 2019, p.7). These findings by Ferow work hand in hand with Roubenzadeh's, as both display a changed mindset and understanding of grief in participants who went through a group counseling treatment.

Treatment Process

Before being able to begin treatment for grief, adolescents must go through a screening process. This process helps to identify which adolescents would be a good fit for a group treatment and is also able to determine which participants to exclude. Participants may be excluded for a variety of reasons. Some studies suggest that adolescents with "Co-occurring mental health problems that interfere with academic functioning" may be at greater risk of undermining the "potential effectiveness of treatment" (Grassetti et al., 2018, p.10).

However, there are a few steps that must be taken before the screening process. The first is a referral, which can be done by the adolescent, a parent, teacher, coach, etc. Once the referral has taken place, a parent or guardian must sign a consent form for the teen to be screened. Screening and an individual interview will take place. After that the parent or guardian sign consent for treatment the treatment process can begin. Treatment for adolescents usually comes in the form of a group and is done in schools. The downside to this is the use of take-home lessons and it limited the direction for future research (Grassetti et al., 2018).

There are a multitude of activities and therapies that can be used in the treatment process. In group counseling programs, most sessions start with an introduction, then have one or more activities (based on the time frame of the session) and conclude with a discussion. Of course, the format varies according to different programs, instructors and member needs. Some of the most effective activities used in group therapy treatment allowed for creativity and self-expression, a finding which is presented by Meredith Edgar-Bailey. Bailey (2010) uses “Writing and Drawing Trauma Narratives” in conjunction with Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) as one form of treatment. Journaling and writing letters are also methods that Bailey condones. While each of these techniques can be used alone or with other therapies Bailey states, “they [creative interventions] serve as tools to enhance CBT-based therapy and the resolution of traumatic grief” (Bailey, 2010, p.163). The above methods are just a few examples of the treatment process used within group counseling.

Conclusion

Grief is difficult to understand at any stage of life. The teenaged years of adolescence may just be the most complicated time to experience it though. Hormonal changes set up teens for mood shifts, uncertainty and feeling uncomfortable. This literature review took the time to define grief, highlight some of the hardships that high school age students face when confronted with grief, demonstrate the most common ways that grief is measured, and show the treatment process for grief. After the examination of previous group counseling studies and manuals, there is evidence to suggest that group counseling is one of the most effective ways to treat teens who are experiencing grief. It is the hope that by using the above information in a group manual format, adolescents may be better able to recognize their emotions, gain knowledge and understanding about death and learn how to cope with grief.

Group Overview

Type of Group

This is an open support group for high school aged adolescents (ages 14-18 years old) who are experiencing grief due to the loss of a loved one. This group is for those who need more assistance than can be readily or immediately provided when emotional or behavioral manifestations of grief become disruptive to daily life.

Group Purpose

The aim of this group is to increase the members' understanding of the concept of death and the typical and atypical reactions to death. It is also the goal of the group to provide a safe space for adolescents to experience their grief in conjunction with others and learn how to handle their grief.

Member Qualifications

This group will be most suitable for adolescents ages fourteen to eighteen years of age, who have experienced the loss of a parent. A potential member may be excluded if they are experiencing active psychosis; examples of this include the adolescent reporting seeing or hearing things that are not there and/or if the child has a history of physical violence. Participation is vital to receive any help from this group. The group leaders expect participation in the ice breakers and any activity present in sessions. Participation is encouraged during group discussions.

Facilitator Qualifications

The group facilitator must be a licensed counselor, who has earned a master's degree from an accredited program. The facilitator may hold a degree in either school counseling or

mental health counseling. A counseling intern may also lead the group, as long as they are under the supervision of a licensed school or mental health counselor.

Group Process

Group members will be selected to the group by parent, teacher or self-recommendation. There will be a consent form that will need to be signed by a legal guardian. There will be a maximum of ten members for this group. This is an open group, so it possible that the members may not finish the group with the same people they started with. The group will take place immediately following the end of the school day.

Group Sessions

Group will consist of a 30-minute session each week for seven weeks. Each session will start with an ice breaker/check in to create familiarity within the group and to assess how each group members' week has been. The session will include two or three short activities and a discussion topic that coordinates with the activities.

Disclosure

This group may cause the adolescents to experience the difficulty of grief, and this can lead to them lashing out in abnormal ways. Please notify the group leaders if this does occur, as we can discuss it in the group.

Group Manual

Week 1

ASCA Standards: M1, M2, B-SS 2, B-SS 4, B-SS9

Content Covered and Goals: The first week will be used as an introduction session. The group will discuss aspects of the group and what is expected. The members will also spend a great deal of time getting to know about each other through ice breaker activities.

Lesson of the Week: This week's lesson will go over the group's goals, expectations, and will review the informed consent form. The facilitator will lead a conversation about what privileged communication will look like in a group and the breaks in confidentiality. Group privileged communication will look different as it is not a conversation between the client and a counselor but a conversation with nine other clients. It will be stressed that members must keep confidentiality, but the group leaders cannot promise complete confidentiality.

Activities for the Week:

1. The first activity will be an ice breaker. We will go around and introduce ourselves with our names and an answer to a facilitator question (what is your favorite ice cream flavor, if money wasn't a concern where would you travel to, etc.)
2. The next activity will be going over the group overview page in this manual and talking about informed consent and privileged communication. Group members and group leaders must be all have the same understandings and be informed that breaks in confidentiality are not allowed.
3. Complete Typical Beliefs Questionnaire
4. Activity four will be another ice breaker to end the group on a high note. We will play a game of letter association. To play, the group leaders will start by saying a letter and

having the other group leader say the first word that comes to mind. The group will then go around in a circle until everyone has had a turn.

5. Please complete week one in the Feeling Log.

Group Discussion: There will be two group discussions. The first discussion will take place after the first activity to discuss any questions regarding the group overview and informed consent to make sure that all the information was clear. It will also aid in helping make sure everyone is on the same page. The second discussion will be after the members have completed the “Typical Beliefs” questionnaire. Members will be invited to share how they feel after filling out the questionnaire with the understanding that all of their answers remain private.

Week Two

ASCA Standards: M2, B-SS 4, B-SS 9, B-SS 10

Content Covered and Goals: This week’s goal is to define grief and death. Group leaders will facilitate a conversation about the universal meaning(s) of grief and death. Group members will be encouraged to share their own personal definition(s) of grief and death.

Lesson of the Week: Defining grief can mean talking about their symptoms, talking about what grief feels like, or even giving it a solid definition. No two experiences with great and/or death are the same and this should be recognized. “While many theories and models of the grieving process provide a helpful framework, the path itself is individual...” (Schuurman, 2002, p.1). Being able to define grief and death is a step towards healing.

Activities for the Week:

1. The first activity will be to ask the members to describe what they know about death. This will allow a conversation about death to be started for the group leaders to learn what the members know about death.

2. The second activity will have group members define grief and what grief means to them.
3. Group members will talk about some of their feelings towards the death of their loved one and what they do when their emotions get to be too much for them. This will provide essential examples of how others feel and start to get the members feeling that it is ok to show their emotions towards the death of their loved one.
4. Please complete week two in the Feelings log

Group Discussion: This week's group discussion will focus on grief and death and what members know about each topic. After the weekly activities, the group will discuss any questions and thoughts they have about grief and share their personal experiences (if they feel comfortable).

Week Three

ASCA Standards: M1, M2, B-SMS 2, B-SS 1, B-SS 4

Content Covered and Goals: This week will focus on remembering loved ones. The group will start with a brief review of the lesson from the previous week. There will be a get to know you exercise to create group cohesion. Group members will be encouraged to introduce their loved one and share a favorite memory of them. A discussion and activity on honoring memory will take place.

Lesson of the Week: There are many ways to remember someone who has passed away. People may experience sadness, anger, or even peace when they think of and remember their loved one. Remembering a loved one is the number three on the “reconciliation process”, which according to Wolfelt is needed to move through the mourning process and forward into a new reality (Torbic, 2011).

Activities for the Week:

1. The session will start off by talking for five minutes to interview a peer in order to get to learn more about others in the group.
2. Group members will go around and introduce the loved one they have lost by telling the group their name and their favorite memory with that loved one.
3. Members will write and recite (optional) eulogies for their loved ones. Many teens do not get a chance to directly participate in funeral services. By writing and reciting a eulogy in front of peers it may provide a sense of closure for the student.
4. Please complete week three in Feeling Log

Group Discussion: This week's discussion will focus remembering and ways we can honor memory. Students will be asked to talk about how they felt after the activities and if their feelings of grief have improved or intensified throughout the session.

Week Four

ASCA Standards: M1, B-SMS 10, B-SS 1, B-SS 2, B-SS 4

Content Covered and Goals: The fourth week will cover feelings related to grief. Feelings related to grief can be very confusing and overwhelming. Often times, it is difficult to name the feelings or process them. By being able to write their feelings down and describe their mood(s), members of the group will have a better understanding of their reaction to grief.

Lesson of the Week: Typical feelings at the start of grief include “numbness, sadness, anger, fear, guilt and relief” (Torbic, 2011, p.69). These feelings can come in waves, at different times or all at once. Teenagers are most likely to hide their feelings to try to fit in (Torbic, 2011), so it can be even more difficult to comprehend feelings.

Activities for the Week:

1. The first activity will be an ice breaker, used to form more bonds within the group. We will go around the group and share one word to describe their mood for that day.
2. The second activity will be a solo activity. The group members are going to have ten minutes to be on their own and fill out the “grief sentence completion” handout.
3. For the third activity, group members will fill out the “feelings guy” worksheet.
4. Complete week four in Feeling Log.

Group Discussion: Members will be invited to share their goodbye letters (if they choose) and how they felt while writing the letters. Members will be encouraged to talk about how/if their feelings or understanding of their feelings has changed in during the past and current group sessions.

Week Five

ASCA Standards: M1, B-SMS 7, B-SMS 9

Content Covered and Goals: The fifth week will focus on coping strategies. First the group leader will define what “coping” means to the group. There are misinterpretations that coping means that someone is moving on or even that they are automatically “better”, but this is not the case. Then the group leader will walk the members through different coping strategies and skills and when to use them.

Lesson of the Week: There are many ways to cope with grief, some healthy, others not as much. The lesson of the week is to learn health coping skills and when to use them. The use and importance of coping skills is based on the stages of understanding grief as presented by (Wolfelt, 2013).

Activities for the Week:

1. The group facilitator will ask the group to imagine their happy place. Then each member will have a chance to describe their happy place (going to your happy place can be used as a coping strategy).
2. For the second activity, the group will share what they do, or think are coping strategies. The group leader will write the ideas down for all to see and then discuss the difference between “positive” and “negative” coping skills (breathing, journaling, talking with others, listening to music, exercise, etc.).
3. The group facilitator will lead the group members through some of the coping skills that were talked about (breathing techniques, grounding, counting).
4. Complete week five in Feeling Log

Group Discussion: The group will discuss the different kinds of coping skills there are and which they feel they would be most likely to use. The group leader will also start a conversation on when to use coping skills and how our body signals can tell a person to start using their coping skills.

Week Six

ASCA Standards: M1, M2, B-SMS 9, B-SS 2, B-SS 3

Content Covered and Goals: The goal for this group session is to learn about supports for once group has ended. These supports can be community based or within family and friend structures. The group leader will also hand out a list of community supports to each member at the end of the session.

Lesson of the Week: As the group starts to come to a close, it is important for members to know where to find support after group. This week’s lesson will focus on creating a support plan and

feature a discussion on who the supports in our lives are. The group facilitator will also discuss group termination before the final session the following week.

Activities for the Week:

1. The first activity will be an ice breaker, used to form more bonds within the group. The group will split into 2s or 3s (depending on group size) and they must come up with three things that they have in common.
2. Group members will make a “support plan” for any future struggles. The plan will include who the member can go to for support, coping strategies the member can try and a safe place the member can go to healthy calm themselves.
3. Complete week six in Feeling Log

Group Discussion: Review the supports that were discussed during group. The group facilitator will also start the conversation on termination, as the next week will be the final group session. Group members will be invited to talk about how they have felt and changed and what they have learned over the last couple weeks during group. Discuss any conflicts or struggles that group members may face upon the completion of group.

Week Seven

ASCA Standards: M1, M2, B-SMS7, B-SMS 9, B-SMS 10, B-SS 1, B-SS 2, B-SS 3, B-SS 4, B-SS 9, B-SS 10

Content Covered and Goals: Week seven will be the closing week of the group. The group will take time to go over supports and coping strategies, review what was learned, and discuss what helped them the most. A reintroduction of lost loved ones will also take place in order for group members to moved towards acceptance.

Lesson of the Week: The final lesson is a way to move towards acceptance and possibly closure. There will be a review of the coping strategies that were introduced to the group and a review of support systems outside of group. The group members will also go through a self-assessment, determining their progress throughout the group.

Activities for the Week:

1. The first activity will have each member of the group reintroduce the loved one they lost. The group member will get a chance to acknowledge that loss out loud and take a step toward acceptance.
2. The second activity will have members of the group write “goodbye” letters to their loved ones. As group ends, it is the goal to leave the members in a place of acceptance and being able to say “goodbye” can help to lead them in that direction.
3. The third activity will have the group member fill out a self-assessment. The assessment is the “Typical beliefs assessment,” and it will help determine the group member’s progress.
4. Complete week 7 in Feelings Log

Group Discussion: There will be group discussion and a closing discussion for members to ask any questions they might still have about grief. Members will be able to share their feelings that still relate to grief as well. The leader will ensure that the group members understand that completing the group does not mean that the member is now without grief. It is a tool that hopefully allowed the members to have a better understanding of grief and provide coping mechanisms for all to use.

Appendix A

Informed Consent Example

Dear Parent/Guardian,

My name is [insert name] and I am the School Counselor at [insert school name]. One of my roles as the School Counselor is to provide and lead group counseling sessions for students. This is done to help students succeed academically, socially and emotionally. There is a group counseling session being provided to students who have been affected by grief or loss. This group will be taking place once a week, during the school day for seven weeks. Grief and loss can affect a student in a variety of ways, including; physically, emotionally, socially, and academically. Having a support group may be able to diminish the severity of grief and the effects it has on a student. If you feel that this group could benefit your student, please sign and return this form by [insert due date]. The ethical guidelines for all counseling will be in place during these group sessions. All information shared during group will be kept confidential, unless there is an ethical obligation to inform a parent/guardian. Situations in which confidentiality may be discarded include if a student shares that they are planning to harm themselves or others, if a student discloses child abuse or if the counselor is subpoenaed by courts.

By signing this form, I give consent for my child to participate in the counseling group for grief and loss.

Parent/Guardian _____ Date _____

Student Name: _____

Sincerely,

[Insert School Counselor's Name]

[Insert School Name]

[Insert Phone Number]

[Insert Email Address]

Appendix B

Typical Beliefs Questionnaire

Initial: _____

Date: ____/____/____



THE CENTER FOR
COMPLICATED GRIEF

Typical Beliefs Questionnaire (TBQ)

Bereaved people have some typical thoughts and beliefs about their loved one's death and about themselves, others, and the world at large. People differ in how strongly they think or believe these things. Please read each item below and circle the number from 0-4 that indicates how strongly you believe it.

1. This death should not have happened

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately	Strongly	Very Strongly

2. You should have done something to prevent the death or make it easier

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately	Strongly	Very Strongly

3. Someone else could have prevented this death or made it easier

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately	Strongly	Very Strongly

4. The world is filled with unpredictable dangers

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately	Strongly	Very Strongly

5. Grief is your main tie to your loved one because it feels like all you have left of them

0	1	2	3	4
Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately	Strongly	Very Strongly

Appendix C

Feelings Log Example

Week	Feelings Log	Guardian Signature
Week 1	Write about how you initially felt at your loved one's passing.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Week 2	Write about how you define grief and what grief means to you.	
Week 3	Write anything you want about your loved one.	
Week 4	Write about how your feelings can <u>changed</u> over the last few weeks (if they have changed).	
Week 5	Write down some of the coping strategies you learned and how you will use them in the future.	
Week 6	Write about your support group.	
Week 7	Reflect on your experiences from group	

Appendix D

Grief Sentence Completion Example

Grief Sentence Completion

Right now, I feel... _____

I feel the saddest when... _____

The thing I miss most about the person I lost is... _____

Since the loss, things have been different because... _____

My family usually feels... _____

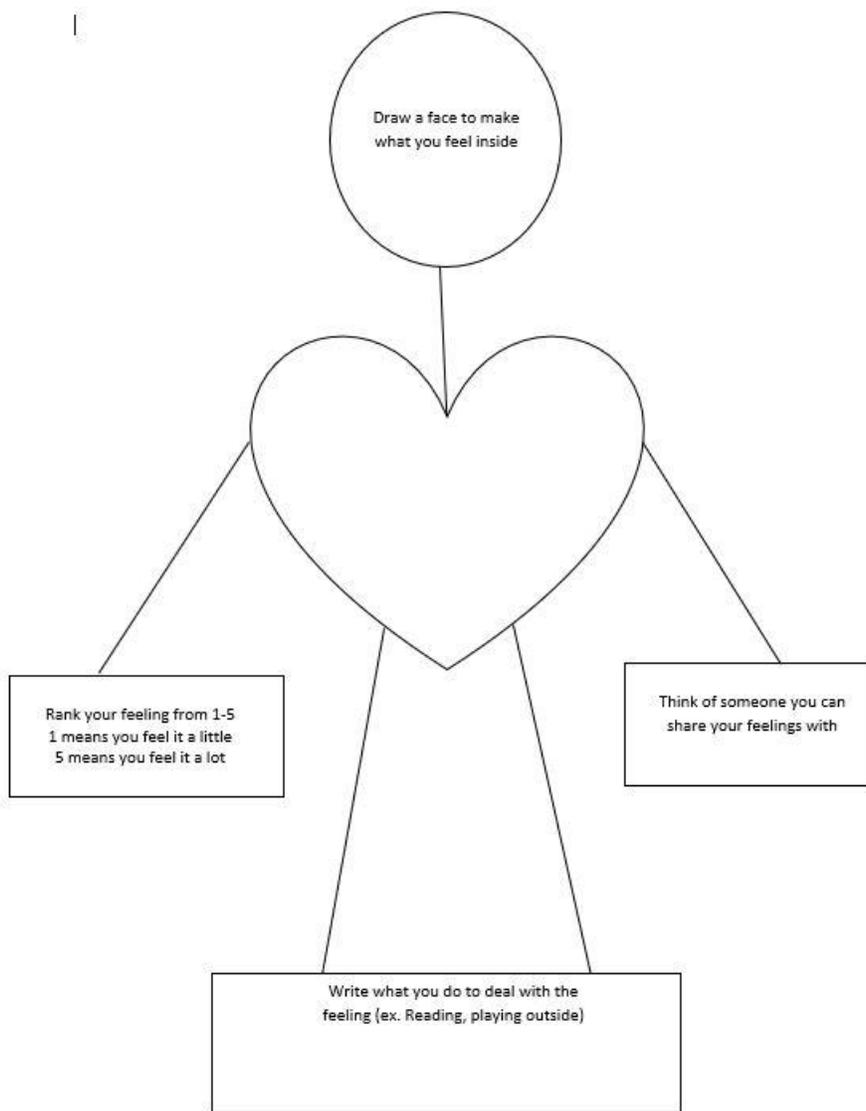
If I could ask the person I lost one thing, I would ask... _____

Something I liked about the person who I lost was... _____

One thing I learned from the person who I lost is... _____

Appendix E

Feelings Guy Example



Resource adapted from Be the Boss: Lesson on Feelings | Education World

Appendix F

Goodbye Letters Example

Goodbye Letter

To: _____

I am saying goodbye because _____

Saying goodbye makes me feel _____

I remember a time when we _____

You taught me _____

Something I want you to know is _____

I will always remember _____

From: _____

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Appendix G

Support Plan Example

I **My Support Plan**

The Problem

The Plan

The Problem

The Plan

Who can help?

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