



Grief Counseling Teens after a tragic event

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Listen and validate feelings. Be there as long as they need to talk. Be willing to sit in silence and tell them it is healing to talk but you can wait until they are ready. They came to you so they need to process.

Possible Questions:

How did you find out?

How did it make you feel? (possible feelings: Shocked, surprised, sad, anger, denial)

Did you know xxxxx? Tell me about him/her.

When was the last time you talked or seen?

Are you a person of faith?

What does your faith say about what happen? (possible topics: Death, Heaven, God, suicide, not sure)(Don't preach to them, let them talk)

Tell me about the different emotions since you found out? (Remember Grief comes in waves. Big ones and small ones. It is a process. It is not always about being sad. Numbness is common. Validate emotions.

How are your friends dealing with this?

Do you know someone that needs to talk to a counselor?

Do you have an adult you can talk to after school? Or someone you can turn to? Who?

How are you sleeping? Eating?

REFER: if you have someone that is talking suicide or hopelessness. Ask them if they are thinking about suicide. If so, consider them one on one until you get them to trained counselor, MFLC, school staff. Also refer anyone having complicated grief. Let the professionals handle it. They are trained.

Sometimes you don't have to ask any questions. It will flow. Embrace the silence if they are don't answer. Be there. (Ministry of Presence) Comfort them. Be on the lookout for feelings of guilt.

End of the session: (Button as a Transitional Object)

Consider the button. (hold up button) Small yet powerful. Buttons hold things together. You need them to keep your clothes on. You use them every day. If you lose one, you find another. We have to have them. Please, take a button. Anyone you want.

What holds you together? At times like this, we think about what holds us together. We have family. Parents and siblings help hold us together. We have friends. Some closer than others. We lean on them to hold us together. We have teachers and counselors. They guide your day and hold you accountable on many different levels. You have a community that holds you together. Maybe you go to the teen center or pizza bowl. That community holds you together. Maybe you are a person Faith. You might say God, Jesus, the church or Saints hold you together.

Tell me who holds you together. (REFLECTIVE LISTENING). OK, now, tell me who do YOU hold together? (REFLECTIVE LISTENING).

Remember that sharing is caring. We are here for you. You are never alone. Keep your button as a remembrance of what happen. A remembrance that you are not alone. A remembrance that you can talk to everyone you just mentioned and maybe they need someone to talk to also. Sometimes we are the button to someone else. This is a safe place. You can stay here as long as you need.

NOTES:

Have Kleenex on hand.

Boys seem easier to talk in a group.

Look out for the quiet one in the group.

Kids will cluster with friends and become teens again joking around. That is OK. Let them have their time.

In the Crisis Action Debrief: Give the names of high risk youth and those needing follow up.

Ask the staff, teachers, counselors, other crisis members how they are feeling?

Talk to someone yourself. Studies show care members can be affected by all the transference.