

Objective: Coping with Grief: Teaching children to express their emotions

Teacher Resource:

Helping Children cope with grief

https://childmind.org/guide/helping-children-cope-with-grief/#block_80e42ea0-4bfa-45c7-b0fb-34ae839c9bfb

Procedure:

In the classroom:

Bereaved children and adolescents express their grief in many different ways, which is perfectly normal. You can support a child by providing a safe space for them to talk about their grief and by finding ways to accompany them in their grief.

Begin by talking to children about loss of a loved one – it could be a member of the family, a friend or even a pet. It is important to let children express themselves verbally. But some children find it difficult to do so. Creative arts are helpful techniques for children who are more comfortable expressing grief non-verbally.

The Facilitator can ask the children to create a Memory Box or a Memory Tree (as in the story) of a loved one - dead or alive.

Facilitators then encourage the child to name the items and describe why they chose them as they are put in the box/or on the tree. If children do not have objects or photos, they can write or draw a memory of their loved one. Children should be reminded that anytime they are thinking of their loved one they can return to the box/tree.

The purpose of a memory box/tree is to protect the important object(s) connected to a loved one and symbolically and physically keep the memories alive. Allowing children to return to the box is like visiting a loved one and they can do so whenever they choose to.

Once you get home:

Once they get home, tell them to speak to the people at home (could be a family member or someone working for them) and appreciate them for whatever they do. Make them realise that it is important to spend valuable time with and appreciate those that are still here with them.

The Memory Tree

When a loved one dies, children feel and show their grief in different ways. How children cope with the loss depends on things like their age, how close they felt to the person who died, and the support they receive.