



Grief & Loss in School

What Can I Do? What Can I Say?

These questions are better answered by thinking of “Who can I be?”

I can be a teacher who ...

- ❖ soothes my own fearfulness in order to think and respond with calmness and leadership.
- ❖ views my role as a leader who models healthy, adaptive ways of accepting and coping with loss.
- ❖ provides an open classroom that honestly acknowledges what has happened.
- ❖ expects questions about what and why something happened and answers these as well as possible with the facts of the situation.
- ❖ isn't afraid to say, “It makes no sense to me, either.”
- ❖ understands that the phrase “I know how you feel” is not helpful to most people.
- ❖ offers no comparison of how things could be better or worse.
- ❖ allows for shock when people need protection from feeling overwhelmed by the situation.
- ❖ views anger as normal and potentially helpful in mobilizing in tragedy but cautions when anger blames others.
- ❖ reassures students that *they* are not to blame for what happened.
- ❖ is unafraid of expressions of sadness and encourages these through words and pictures.
- ❖ offers security and trust by maintaining predictable schedules and usual routines and activities in the classroom.
- ❖ encourages creative ways for students to reach out to each other, to remember, and to tell their individual stories.
- ❖ understands how grief looks in children/adolescents.
- ❖ seeks the assistance of other professions for support (school counselors, administrators, other teachers, etc.).
- ❖ understands that resolution of loss is not getting over or moving on, but living with what has happened.
- ❖ creates and facilitates a safe and supportive context of community around grief.