

Good Grief in the Classroom



Three Healthy Stages of Grief with Children

Good Grief is knowing you can make a difference for a child who has had or is experiencing loss

Good Grief is understanding what loss is and how it affects the child

Good Grief is helping a child through the grief process so he or she can heal and move forward

Stage I: SHOCK AND DENIAL

Shock and denial can run from "I can't believe it" to numbing robot-like behavior, becoming withdrawn and expressionless. This stage can last a few days or weeks.

Stage II: SUFFERING AND DISORGANIZATION

This stage evokes many strong emotional feelings, is the most painful stage and lasts the longest. Child may have health problems, find it difficult to concentrate, become withdrawn or act overtly aggressive and feel despair and disorganization.

Stage III: ACCEPTANCE AND REORGANIZATION

Final stage is when child accepts the loss, and starts to let go of the past, now focusing on rebuilding and getting on with life.

There is no absolute time, sequence or means of accelerating movement through stages. Stages may be returned to several times. It is unhealthy to be stuck in a stage; physiological, emotional or social symptoms may occur.

(Courtesy of The Center for Grief and Loss at Hospice Caring Project of Santa Cruz County (688-7684) . . .

Do's & Don'ts **When Dealing with a Child in Loss**

- Do**
- Trust your instincts, hunches, gut feelings
 - Project an atmosphere that is safe and friendly
 - Encourage the child to express feelings and thoughts
 - LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN . . . and then validate the feelings of loss and pain
 - Help the child understand that grief is a process and that she/he can make it through
 - Marshall positive forces in the child's life; not everything is a downer . . .
 - Keep confidence unless the child's safety is threatened
 - Realize that not talking about loss won't make it go away
 - Share the knowledge that it is okay to laugh, play and have a good time; it does not mean you did not love or care about the person

- Don't**
- Judge, criticize, blame or give advice
 - Do most of the talking
 - Say "expired," gone away," "resting," "asleep;" say "died" and "dead."
 - Be afraid to tell the child that you do not know all the answers
 - Assume that only the "acting out" child needs help; sometimes "good" behavior and quiet mask the pain
 - Go overboard in allowing the child leeway; structure and routine help keep balance
 - Become a substitute for the deceased person
 - Believe a child thinks the same as an adult
 - Think a child's moving about when you are talking always means he/she is disrespectful; the child may need to move

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Warning Signs: When to Seek Professional Help

Child is stuck in the grief process

- extreme guilt, denial, disbelief, anger, fear, panic
- negative view of self, world and relationship to it
- continued hostile reaction to deceased or putting deceased on a pedestal
- daydreaming excessively
- marked changes in personality
- trouble with sleeping or sleeping too much
- loss of appetite, becoming drawn, anorexic, bulimic
- sudden attacks of delinquency, stealing or drug involvement
- releasing anger in unhealthy ways toward self and others
- withdrawing and becoming self-isolated
- fear of illness, being abandoned

Children may demonstrate some of these behaviors and feelings at the beginning of loss; the key is *intensity* and *duration*.

Child is susceptible to suicide

- prolonged depression
- threats of suicide
- previous suicide attempts
- irregular eating and/or sleeping habits
- loss of interest in life, school or job
- giving away possessions or making final arrangements
- marked changes in personality or behavior

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Disaster Services Publications: Materials for Teachers and Schools

<http://www.redcross.org/pubs/dspubs/tchrschl.html>

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**Download
PDF Version
For Teachers and
Schools/
For Children**

Many American Red Cross Community Disaster Education materials about natural hazards are used in classrooms every day. The materials specifically designed for classroom/school use are listed below. For information about materials on natural hazards, see the *Subject Index*.

Curriculum for Schools

Be Ready 1-2-3 (Children ages 5-8)

Fire (Children 4-12)

Look Hot! Slay Cool!

Jason & Robin's Awesome Hurricane Adventure

General Preparedness

Curriculum for Schools

Masters of Disaster Integrated Disaster Safety Curriculum. A curriculum for teachers to use to integrate hazard safety into regular academic lesson plans in math, science, social studies, and language arts. Available in three complete kits for teachers of Grades K-2, Grades 3-5, and Grades 6-8. Consult the linked web site for ordering information.

Masters of Disaster marketing video. A 6-minute video that shows children and teachers in the classroom using the *Masters of Disaster* curriculum. Local Red Cross chapters can order as stock number A1285VVE for a nominal fee.

Facing Fear: Helping Young People Deal With Terrorism and Tragic Events. A curriculum supplement for teachers to help them deal with children's concerns, fears, anger, and feelings when human-caused events occur. Aligned with national standards in social studies, health, and language arts. Available in four complete sets for teachers of grades K-2, Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, and Grades 9-12. Each set of materials consists of a Lesson Plans book for adults, and an activities book from which copies can be made for children. Consult the linked web site for ordering information.

Safety Watchers: Fire Safety. A curriculum supplement for teachers and educators to integrate home fire safety into regular academic lesson plans in math, science, social studies, and language arts. Available in two sections, one for children in Grades K-2, and another for children in Grades 3-5. **Available as PDF files only**

Be Ready 1-2-3

Be Ready 1-2-3. 8-page workbook that helps children ages 5-8 learn about home fires, earthquakes, and winter storms through activities and demonstrations led by “experts” Cool Cat (Home Fires), Ready Rabbit (Winter Storms) and Disaster Dog (Earthquakes). Local Red Cross chapters can order packages of 25 as stock number A5017 for a nominal fee. Also available on-line: **English, Spanish and Vietnamese versions available.**

Be Ready 1-2-3 Instructor’s Manual. Designed for adults to use to lead the lessons in the **Be Ready** program, contains plans for lessons on home fires, winter storms, and earthquakes. It also contains an appendix giving information on how to reach children effectively, working with puppets, and explaining the program to parents.

Available on-line only English version:

Be Ready 1-2-3 Completion Certificate. Designed to be presented to children who complete sections of the *Be Ready 1-2-3* program. Local Red Cross chapters can order packages of 25 as stock number C-814 for a nominal fee.

Fire Safety

Children’s Activity Poster 17" x 22" poster. Designed for younger children (ages 4-8) on one side and older children (ages 8-12) on the other. The “young children” side consists of four panels on fire safety information. The “older children” side consists of a maze, word-find, escape plan, and a list of questions and answers about fire safety. Local Red Cross chapters can order in packages of 50 as stock number A5034 for a nominal fee.

For more Fire Safety materials, also consider

Be Ready 1-2-3

Look Hot! Stay Cool!

Safety Watchers: Home Fire Safety

Look Hot! Stay Cool!

Look Hot! Stay Cool! Presenter’s Guide. Lesson plans for presenting the six-part youth unit and one-part adult unit of this program. To be used by educators, not for distribution. Produced by St. Paul Area Chapter and local fire department. Local Red Cross chapters can order as stock number A5092 for a nominal fee.

Look Hot! Stay Cool! Children’s Activity Book. Written materials to accompany lessons delivered for this program. Local Red Cross chapters can order in packages of 25 as stock number A5092A for a nominal fee.

Video: Look Hot! Stay Cool! Kid’s Video. 13-minute video that works with lessons delivered in this program. Not designed to be used as a stand-alone presentation. Local Red Cross chapters can order as stock number A5092K for a nominal fee.

Video: Look Hot! Stay Cool! Adult Video. 13-minute video that works with the adult lesson plan in this program. Local Red Cross chapters can order as stock number A5092V for a nominal fee.

Hurricane Safety

Jason and Robin's Awesome Hurricane Adventure 12-page, 4-color workbook for children in 3rd to 6th grade about hurricane facts, hazard avoidance, planning, supplies, and what to do when a Watch and Warning is issued. Local Red Cross chapters can order in packages of 25 as stock number A5044 for a nominal fee.

Video: Jason and Robin's Awesome Hurricane Adventure 10 minutes. Jason and Robin explore a hurricane and provide essential preparedness information. Works with print brochure by same title. Local Red Cross chapters can order as stock number A5044V for a nominal fee.

General Preparedness

Emergency Supplies for Schools. Information on recommended supplies for schools, classrooms, and students. It includes instructions on assembling supplies and provides background information, as well as specific listings of suggested items that schools and school children should have. This list was developed from lists created by the California Senate Select Committee on the Northridge Earthquake, Task Force on Education, and updated October, 2000, by the American Red Cross.

Video: Adventures of the Disaster Dudes. Video-based program comes with a Presenter's Guide and a 14 minute video. The video is designed to be shown in three segments that feature children describing what a disaster really is, information on correct response, and how to create a family disaster plan. Local Red Cross chapters can order as stock number A5024 for a nominal fee.

Video: Keeping Ahead of the Storm. 8-minute video developed by The Weather Channel and the American Red Cross for Project Safeside. Gives preparedness tips for tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, heat waves, and lightning. Local Red Cross chapters can order as stock number A5050 for a nominal fee.

Resources on Coping with Traumatic Events

Websites:

<http://helping.apa.org/therapy/traumaticstress.html>

APA website. Brochure entitled *Managing Traumatic Stress: Tips for Recovering from Disasters and other Traumatic Events*.

<http://helping.apa.org/daily/tasseys.html>

APA website. *Coping with the Aftermath of a Disaster: John Tasseys, Ph.D. Answers your Questions*

<http://www.usd.edu/dmhi/Pubs/availability.html>

University of South Dakota -Disaster Mental Health Institute Website. Contains short booklets on coping with disaster that can be printed from the website.

<http://www.mentalhealth.org/schoolviolence/teens.htm>

Center for Mental Health Services website.
After Disaster: What Teens Can Do

<http://www.mentalhealth.org/schoolviolence/parents.htm>

Center for Mental Health Services website.
After a Disaster: A Guide for Parents and Teachers

http://www.nasponline.org/NEAT/crisis_0911.html

National Association of School Psychologists. Coping with a national tragedy. Has several resources including Helping Children Cope with Tuesday's Acts of Terrorism.

<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/violence.cfm>

National Institute of Mental Health Website. A comprehensive section entitled *Helping Children and Adolescents Cope with Violence and Disasters*. Contains more in-depth information on Trauma, PTSD, etc.

<http://www.trauma-pages.com/pg5.htm>

David Baldwin's Trauma Information website. Disaster Mental Health Handouts.

Red Cross Brochures:

Available at your local Red Cross Chapter or through the APA Practice Directorate's Disaster Response Network Office at 1-800-374-2723

When Bad Things Happen

Helping Children Cope With A Traumatic Event

Helping Children and Cope with Disaster - ARC 4499

Resources: Coping with Grief and Loss

Websites:

<http://www.suicidology.org>

American Association of Suicidology. Information about understanding and preventing suicide.

<http://www.compassionbooks.com>

References dealing with a wide range of topics related to grief and loss. Provides a catalog with over 400 resources.

<http://www.adec.org>

Association of Death Education and counseling.

<http://www.Dougy.org>

Website for nation leaders in the bereavement support center movement for children and adults.

<http://www.centering.org>

Books on death, dying, grief and mourning.

<http://www.hospicefoundation.org>

List of local hospice groups, information about national teleconferencing, resources, and the newsletter, *Journey*.

Bibliography:

Popular children's books that may be helpful to children who have lost a loved one

Aliki. **The Two of Them.**
Bach, Richard. **Jonathan Livingston Seagull.**
Blackburn, Lynn Bennett. **Timothy Duck.**
Brown, Margaret. **The Dead Bird.**
Buck, Pearl S. **The Big Wave.**
Buscaglia, Leo. **The Fall of Freddie the Leaf.**
Byars, Betsy. **Goodbye Chicken Little.**
Carrick, Carol. **The Accident.**
Cleaver, Vera. **Grover.**
Clifton, Lucille. **Everett Anderson's Goodbye.**
Coerr, Eleanor. **Sakako and The Thousand Paper Cranes.)**
Cooney, Barbara. **Miss Rumphius.**
de Paola, Tomie. **Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs.**
Graever, Charlotte. **Mustard.**
Greene, Constance. **Beat the Turtle Drum.**
Hammond, Janice M. **When My Dad Died.**
Krementz, Jill. **How It Feels When a Parent Dies.**
Lee, Virginia. **The Magic Moth.**
L'Engle, Madeleine. **Ring of Endless Light.**
Le Shan, Eda. **Learning to Say Goodbye.**
Lowry, Lois. **A Summer to Die.**
Miles, Miska. **Annie and The Old One.**
Paterson, K. **Bridge to Terabithia.**
Prestine, Joan Singleton. **Someone Special Died.**
Rofes, Eric. **A Kids Book About Death and Dying.**
Smith, Doris Buchanan. **Taste of Blackberries.**
Stickney, Doris. **Waterbugs and Dragonflies.**
Stiles, Norman. **I'll Miss You Mr. Hooger.**
Viorst, Judith. **The Tenth Good Thing About Barney.**
White, E.B. **Charlotte's Web.**
Zolotow, Charlotte. **It's Not Fair.**
Zolotow, Charlotte. **My Grandson Lew.**

School Emergency Mental Health Response Committee: Additional Web Site Resources

The University of South Dakota Disaster Mental Health Institute-
www.usd.edu/dmhi/pubs/availability

ERIC Clearinghouse on Counseling & Student Services-
www.ericass.uncg.edu/virtuallib/stresstrauma/parents.html
Examples- Trauma & Children, School Violence, Children &
Fear of War & Terrorism Tips for Parents & Teachers, Web
Resources for Talking to Children & Teens about Terrorism &
Biochemical Incidents.

American Psychological Association-
www.apa.org/
See site map for ACT: Act Against Violence, Disaster Trauma
Resources, Healthy Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Students Project,
Warning Signs for Parents, Teachers, & Students.

American Red Cross-
www.redcross.org/disaster/masters/facing_fear
Examples- disaster mental health curricular materials, handouts
for children and parents and availability in many languages.

The Centre for Crisis Psychology-
www.ccpdirect.co.UK/
Examples- Trauma and Counseling.

National Institute of Mental Health-
www.nimh.nih.gov/publicat/violence.cfm
Examples-Helping the child or adolescent trauma survivor.

National Center for Children Exposed to Violence-
www.nccer.org/resources/terrorism/9-11-01.html
Examples- In the aftermath of terrorism

National Association of School Psychologists-
www.nasponline.org/NEAT
Many excellent resources

Rethinking Schools-An Urban Education Resource-
www.rethinkingschools.org/special_reports/
Examples-War, terrorism and our classrooms, Facts about
Poetry in times of Crisis.

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services-
Center for Mental Health Services
www.mentalhealth.org/safeschools/default.asp
Examples- School violence prevention.

Stay Alert, Stay Safe-
www.sass.ca/bully.htm
Examples- How kids put Bullies in their Place-without force or
violence