

PERSPECTIVES ON HEALING



Perspectives of Troy Counseling Centers - Trauma and Grief Department

Spring Edition, 2017

Understanding Grief in Children

Before we can talk to our children about grief, we have to understand our own feelings about grief. As adults, we must be comfortable in our own understanding and beliefs about death so that we can communicate effectively and provide our children with the reassurance they deserve.



Help prepare yourself for talking to children about grief by exploring your own feelings about loss. Bad things do happen to good people. How do I make sense of this? The world is an unpredictable place for all of us. How can I explain the randomness of life to my children? How do I explain that God's promise to us isn't one of a perfect life, but instead His promise is of companionship through life?

Perspectives Talks presents:

“How to Talk to Children about Grief”

June 24th, 2017 10:00 am - 11:30 am 888 W. Big Beaver, Ste 1450, Troy, MI 48084

Call 248-244-8644 NOW to register! Seating is limited.

Just \$45.00 due at time of registration.

Become an expert on your own feelings of grief. It's important to talk to your children about death. Parents who don't take the time to talk about the important subject of death with their children, allow their children to mistakenly fill in the blanks with erroneous information. Also, these parents are conveying the subtle message that death and subsequent grief are subjects that aren't discussed. These children may learn to suppress their emotions, leading to life long emotional difficulties.

Perspectives of Troy Counseling Centers

Troy: (248) 244-8644, Sterling Heights: (586) 268-6712

Novi: (248) 946-4664

Visit our website:

PerspectivesofTroy.com

The Grieving Child

Patricia Mroch, MA, LPC, CAADC

Director of Trauma and Grief Services
Perspectives of Troy Counseling Centers

We are born with the ability to grieve. Surprising to some, but long known by researchers, infants display grief from their very first moments of life. If a primary caretaker, typically a parent, is removed from the infant's life—the infant will show signs of grief. These signs present themselves as agitation, sleep disturbances and appetite disturbances.

As children begin to grow, a young child may not respond to news that a death has occurred. During this concrete stage of development (up to age 12) the concept of death is based on the child's five senses. An individual is gone and then an individual is here. If an individual is gone and continues to be gone a young child may grieve the smell, touch or sound of the person. The young child may grieve each time one of these senses formerly provided for by the missing individual is deprived from them.

Being in a concrete stage of development, young children (up to age 12) tend to generalize from the specific to the general. For example, if an individual died in their sleep, a young child may believe that they themselves will also die when they go to sleep. Therefore, adults play an important part in the young child's understanding of grief. Helping children to feel more comfortable in the midst of grief can be the most rewarding job we have as adults.

Answer children's questions about death concretely. Honest and simple answers are the most effective approaches. Avoid euphemisms, e.g. "went to sleep", and avoid too much detail. Children will ask what they want to know.

*The caring professionals at
Perspectives of Troy Counseling Centers
can help.*

Children are repetitive in their grief. Children ask questions over and over again as a means to understand. Therefore, adults need to answer repetitively!

Children are physical in their grief. It's impossible to separate young children (up to age 12) from their grief. Movement is their communication. Reflect their play verbally as a means to emotionally lend support.

Children grieve cyclically. The work of grief cycles through childhood. As children pass through different developmental stages, they will revisit their grief. This is considered normal!

Children grieve as a part of a family. Children don't live in vacuums. What effects us effects them!

Source: Dougy Center



**Perspectives of Troy
Counseling Centers**

"You Need Not Walk Alone"

**(248) 244-8644, (586) 268-6712
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3 LOCATIONS, 1 GREAT RESOURCE!

~ ~

Trauma & Grief Services

Specialists helping to ease the suffering of Trauma, Grief & Addictions. Highly effective Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD) available to organizations.

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Highly trained professionals are available to your organization to speak on a variety of mental health and substance abuse topics.

~ ~

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Individual therapy, groups and seminars for children, adolescents and parents on topics from A-Z.

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Radio Broadcasts

*"Family Life Perspectives"
WMUZ 103.5 FM
10:45 am Mon - Fri*

The Work of Grief for Children

Young children under the age of 12 run on their emotions. They are concrete in their thinking and their little egocentric minds don't allow them to grasp the abstract. Death is an abstract concept. How does a young child express their grief?



FEAR - For children, fear is a basic emotion following a death. Who will take care of me? Will we die too? What if my parent dies? These are only a few of the fear based questions a child may ask. However, fear can present itself in other ways as well. Some children will have behavioral regressions when afraid. Some children who were formerly underachievers become over achievers and vice versa, as a response to fear. Still others may display withdrawn behaviors also based in fear.

Children need reassurance and tending to when fear arises.

GUILT - Guilt in children is common due to their egocentric thinking. However, when a death occurs a child may need reminding that their guilt is unrealistic. In an effort to take care of our children we may shield them from information they may need in order to release them from their irrational guilt. Children are sensitive to an adult's emotions. So when an adult is tense or sad, a young child may take responsibility for these feelings.

Children need reassurance and attentiveness when guilt arises.

ANGER - An angry child can be a difficult one, yet anger and grief go hand in hand. A child may be angry at themselves for behavior they've displayed towards the deceased. Children may be angry that the person is no longer in their life. Anger can also be displayed as power to compensate for fear.

Children need reassurance and tending to when anger arises.

SORROW - Children feel sorrow just as an adult would when grieving. Sorrow is an expression of woundedness the child may feel after a loss. Lending comfort through touch, patience and companionship assists the child in feeling safe which is seen as the antidote to sorrow.

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Perspectives of Troy Counseling Centers

TRAUMA AND GRIEF DEPARTMENT

“When after heavy rain the storm clouds
disperse, is it not that they’ve wept themselves
clear to the end?” *Ghalib*

“That’s the worst, I think. When the secret
stays locked within not for want of a teller but
for want of an understanding ear.” *Stephen King*



Perspectives Talks

Presents

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Saturday June 24th, 2017

10:00 am - 11:30 am

888 W. Big Beaver, Ste 1450, Troy, MI 48084

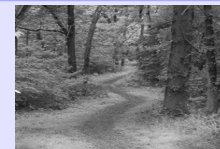
Just \$45.00 due at time of registration.

Highlights include:

- ⇒ Learn your grief style
- ⇒ Understand your child’s grief needs
 - ⇒ Gain grief tools
- ⇒ Build your child’s self-esteem
- ⇒ Identify coping strategies

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