



CNL-518 Topic 8: Bereavement Across the Life Span

Directions: One's understanding of death and the bereavement process changes over the life span. Using the matrix provided below, summarize how individuals understand the various stages of life, death, and how each might grieve the loss of a loved one. Create a short vignette for each age group that expresses your understanding of the age group's response to death and bereavement. Finally, hypothesize how a clinical mental health or school counselor might counsel each age group through the bereavement process. The first stage has been completed for you as an example. Include in-text citations in the chart and references at the bottom of the worksheet as appropriate. Do not exceed 50 words per box.

Age Group	Perception/Cognition of Grief	Response to Grief	Vignette (short example/story of a child's loss scenario)	Developmentally Appropriate Counseling Interventions (including empirically-sound interventions for this age group)
Baby and Toddler	Does not understand the permanency of grief.	Excessive crying and yearning to be held.	A baby's birth mother died during delivery.	Counsel the guardians of the baby to be sure to tend to the baby's need for touch and comfort.
Preschool Age	Preschoolers are likely to believe that death is temporary (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2016). It is something dramatic that comes to "get you" in the middle of the night like a ghost or monster.	Wishful thinking the deceased will return, denial, guilt for thinking they caused their death, regression, (Kail &	A preschooler experiencing the death of their younger brother due to accidental drowning in families pool	Counsel the guardians to be open and honest about the meaning of death. Keep explanations simple, at a level they can understand. Emphasize the importance to not

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		Cavanaugh, 2016)		use euphemisms like "Brother is only sleeping." (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2016)
Grade School Age	Grade-schoolers realize that death is permanent and it will happen to everyone. They also understand deceased individuals no longer have any biological functions (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2016).	Continuous problems at school, anger issues, and physical ailments (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2016)	A grade school aged boy experiencing the death of his grandfather due to a heart attack.	Let the child know that it is okay for them to feel sad, to cry, or express their feelings and emotions in any way they want. This reassurance will help them deal with their confusion at some adults' explanations of death (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2016)

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Adolescence/ Teenage Years	Adolescents have a considerable amount of trouble making sense of death, especially if this is their first experience (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2016).	Guilt, low self-esteem, poor performance in school and work, substance abuse, problems in interpersonal relationships, and suicidal thinking (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2016)	A teenager experiences the death of their mother due to breast cancer	Counselors should be aware that grief at this age contradicts the adolescent's view of themselves as "invincible" and may cause them to question their views and beliefs. Counseling techniques beneficial for this age group is yoga, music, journaling, and art (Slate & Scott, 2009)
Adulthood	Many adults feel as though the individuals who have died in their lives were cheated out of their future (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2016).	Problems in functioning, high anxiety, intense desire to stay connected to deceased through memories, loss of a child in young adulthood may also result in lower cognitive functioning later in life (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2016)	A mother and child get into a serious car accident and the child does not survive.	Encourage client to attend support group for individuals who have lost a child. Also, support them in reviewing past hobbies or seeking out activities to help fill their time and renew their joy. It is also important to remind them to take their time in making big decisions like moving or changing jobs

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				(Slate & Scott, 2009)
Late Adulthood	Older adults are more accepting of death than any other age group. However, this does not mean they are not affected by loss (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2016).	Survivors guilt, regrets about the relationship with the deceased (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2016)	A wife experiencing the loss of her husband due to Alzheimer's	Grieving people tend to find it difficult to ask for help. They feel they would be a burden to others. The counselor should encourage client to enlist their adult support system when needed to prevent any further isolation (Hashim, Eng, Tohit, Wahab, 2013)

References

Hashim SM, Eng TC, Tohit N, Wahab S. Bereavement in the elderly: the role of primary care.

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