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Bereavement Across the Life Span

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CNL-518: Lifespan and Development

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October 12, 2022

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	Has limited knowledge of death and searches for the loved one.	Questioning of mother, grandparents. "when is daddy coming home, when can I see him"	A toddler's father died in a car crash.	Counsel the child on loss of a parent and how to communicate their grief. Counsel the guardian or remaining parent on how to allow the expression, through pictures, music and discussion.

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)
Grade School Age	At this stage children are understanding that death is permanent and that all things live and die.	At this stage children may be irritable, increased tantrum and feeling of helplessness.	Mother passed away from a long-term illness such as diabetes or cancer.	Play or art therapy would benefit children at this age, allowing them time to express their emotions, as they may have difficulties communicating. Counseling the surviving parent to reassure the child's belonging and keeping routines predictable.
Adolescence/ Teenage Years	At this stage the adolescent/teenager understands that death is permanent. Adolescents may have difficulty making sense of death and are often severely affected by bereavement (Kail & Kavanaugh, 2019)	Adolescents have a difficult time communicating their feelings. The effects of bereavement in adolescence can be quite severe and can be expressed in many ways, such as chronic illness, enduring guilt, low self-esteem (Kail & Kavanaugh, 2019).	Grandparent passed away from old age.	A counselor will approach death to this stage with grace and understanding, allowing the adolescent to take time and communicate the specific emotion they may have surrounding the loss of their grandparent.

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)
Adulthood	Very similar to children as they will need to communicate the death and process their grief in stages. Death is permanent and can alter their thoughts to their own life span.	Expected as all things die, however also conflicted to their own life span and expectations. A variety of clinical signs and symptoms, including changes in appearance, withdrawal from social activities, and increased physical complaints, fall within the norm following the loss of someone close (Institute of medicine, 1984).	Parent passed away from treatable illness, however no treatment was received.	In this stage it is important to understand the adults' cultural needs and identifications. Allowing the adult to communicate their emotions and forward life experiences.
Late Adulthood	In this stage the aging adult is welcoming, contemplating the details, sorting through life experiences and challenges.	Less anxious and welcoming	Older adult has just been diagnosed with an incurable illness.	Discussion on grief and the dying process. Additionally discussing their cultural beliefs and tasks to be completed. The counselor may also encourage journaling to document their life and their unique experiences.

References

Kail, R. & Cavanaugh, J. (2019). *Human development: A Life-span view* (8th ed.). Cengage.

Institute of Medicine (US) Committee for the Study of Health Consequences of the Stress of Bereavement; Osterweis M, Solomon F, Green M, editors. Bereavement: Reactions, Consequences, and Care. Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US); 1984.

CHAPTER 3, Adults' Reactions to

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Stroebe, M., & Schut, H. (1999). The dual process model of coping with bereavement: rationale and description. *Death Studies*, 23(3), 197–

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