

SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH LOSS AND GRIEF



OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to:

- Explore ways they can support children to express their feelings about grief, loss and bereavement
- Look at different ways to help children talk about difficult experiences
- Explore children's coping strategies



TIME

1 hour

“ So I used to feel bad by crying all the time and even wonder why my parents had to die. I feel bad when I think of my parents and when I see friends who have both parents I cry to myself. I know I am an orphan. My father and mother died. I feel like I'm just alone. I don't know what killed my parents and people at home don't even want me to ask them about the death of my parents. ”

Quotes from children from the research on children and stigma

ACTIVITIES

Card storm

SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH GRIEF AND LOSS

In pairs, write down all the ways in which children can be affected when their parents die (practical, emotional, social). Write one per card.

EXAMPLES

Ways children are affected by their parents' death

Feel lonely and sad. Worried about the future.

Worried about school. No more education. Worried about where they will stay. Who will feed them? Who will take care of them? Can they stay together with their brothers and sisters? Are they going to get sick too? They withdraw and stop talking. They become aggressive and angry. They start misbehaving. They look depressed.



Cluster cards into categories. Add any extras if participants feel they are missing.

Ask each pair to join with another pair and choose one of the categories. On a flipchart write down all the ways guardians, teachers and other adults can support children who are going through these effects.

Role-play

ACTING OUT

Ask participants to get into groups of threes.

Discuss some of the ways the children you look after have been affected by their parents' death. For example they might be



ACTION IDEAS

Developing a support group. Introduce the idea of a support group to provide mutual help among the parents and guardians. Ask the group to discuss:

- Would you like to help form a support group?
- What would you want from a support group?
- What resources do you need to form a support group?
- How can you build more support from the community?
- How can you network with other groups?

Suggest that one participant takes notes of any actions that need to be taken.

acting strangely, not talking, looking sad all the time, getting into fights, failing at school and so on.

Choose one of the examples to role-play, with one person taking the role of the child, the other the role of the guardian. The third person can either be in the role-play or observe and take notes. The guardian must try to help the child express their feelings.

Share feedback with the big group and use the group to act out some of the plays. Use “Stop-Start” drama to explore different actions by the guardian.

Reflection

WHAT CHANGES CAN I MAKE?

Ask participants to find a quiet space to sit and to think about some changes they could make in the way they treat the children in the family. This may be some personal changes, or practical changes that may improve the family situation. Write some notes of the changes to be made.

After 10 minutes—share with a partner some of the changes. Choose one that you will try to make that you will share with the big group.

In large group, ask each participant to tell the group what change they will make, and write them up on a flipchart. Record what they hope the outcome will be of them making that change.