

LOST

(Getting a Handle on Death/Loss)

Purpose: 1) Raising student awareness on the role mental health counselors have in supporting people dealing with loss. 2) Help students to bring into focus how their network of family, friends and community come together to support one another in times of loss.

Materials: Lost Activity Handout (attached)

Student Materials: Writing instrument (Pencil preferred) and paper *if* handout is not used.

Time: 30 minutes (approximately.)

Key Words: Loss, Death, Grief, Funerals, Celebrations, Customs & Ceremonies.

Part 1

Introduce/re-introduce: Self to students. Review graduation requirements and last classroom lesson provided (ask if anyone remembers what the lesson was and what it was about.)

Reassure: Students that counselors and other mental health people are available at school, in the phone book and on line to support them as they go through middle school, high school, college and throughout their lives.

Inform: Students that they will be participating in a counseling activity today that should be fun, interesting, a little bit surprising and just one more reason why they might go see a counselor someday.

Option A (*Preferred*/using the handout)

Distribute: One copy of the Lost Activity hand out to each participant...face down.

Tell: Students to have their pencil ready and that they will have approximately eight minutes to complete the questions on the other side of the paper after having been given permission to begin.

Announce: Students should write clearly/legibly and should not share their answers with anyone. They should also not write their names on the paper.

Offer: To explain what the questions are asking if anyone needs clarification (raise your hand) once they turn their papers over and begin writing their answers.

Announce: Begin!

Option B (*Not preferred*/using a blank sheet of paper)

Begin: By asking students to take out a sheet of paper.

Tell: Students that they're going to make two folds in their paper.

Show & Tell: Students to first position their paper vertically (normal starting position for 8x11) and then fold their paper in half from top to bottom (across the middle.) Without unfolding the paper, the second fold goes from left to right (down the middle.) The paper should now be $\frac{1}{4}$ the size of the paper each student started out with.

Ask & Look: Students to unfold their paper and then look to ensure everyone has a paper with four sections.

Tell: Students to take out a pencil.

Announce: Writing will matter today. That is, print clearly or write legibly so anyone could easily read your writing.

Inform: Students that part of what we're doing today is a guessing activity to determine how well people know you and that information will only be communicated through your writing.

Instruct & Demonstrate: Students to vertically position their paper flat on their desk directly in front of them and with their pencil...

Label: The lower left corner box with the letter D in its lower left corner.

Label: The lower right corner box with the letter A in its lower right corner.

Rotate: The paper 180 degrees so the top becomes the bottom.

Label: The lower left corner box with the letter B in its lower left corner.

Label: The lower right corner box with the letter C in its lower right corner.

Instruct: Students NOT TO write their name on their paper or allow others to look at the information to be written on the paper.

Have: Students write their responses to the following requests and be SURE to write legibly:

In Section A :

1. Describe a favorite picture of yourself. (Ex. 7th grade yearbook picture)
2. Write down your favorite quote, saying, expression, passage, poem or *lucky numbers*.

In Section B:

1. If you were *Lost*, write down the first names of up to 7 of your family members you could count on.

2. List up to 6 first names of your important friends you could handle being *stranded* with.

In Section C:

1. First names of 5 *others* in this classroom you would have liked to become friends with.
2. Name 4 of the best teachers you've ever had.
3. Write 3 positive words that describe your personality.

In Section D:

1. Write down the names of your 2 favorite songs or *theme songs*.
2. Write down the #1 thing you think you're *meant* or *supposed* to do in life.
3. If you were a flower which one would you be? (ex. *Rose*)

Part 2

Option 1. (Fun)

Announce: When you're done writing, turn your papers face down and put your pencils away.

Tell: Students to stay seated and exchange papers with a classmate.

Tell: Students to stay seated and trade the paper they just received with a different person's paper.

Tell: Students to get up walk across the room and trade papers one more time with someone completely different.

(Just trade papers three times and hope you don't end up with your own!)

(or)

Option 2.

Gather: Student papers and randomly re distribute papers to peers.

State: It's not important who has your paper or where it ended up. Don't try to track down your paper.

Instruct & Demonstrate: Students to keep paper face down and then fold it in half from top to bottom (not hot dog bun style long ways down the middle.)

Instruct: To position the folded paper so that the page numbers 42 and 4 (D and A) are visible and face up.

Instruct & Demonstrate: Students should now fold section page 42 (D) behind section page 4 (A) using the vertical line running down the middle of the page as their guide line.

Display: Your copy as a model of what the finished product should look like. Page 4 is the cover page. Open the booklet up to see page 8/15 on the left and page numbers 16/23 on the right. On the back cover of the booklet will be page number 42.

State: "All the information on the paper you have contains important clues as to whose paper you have. It will help you figure out who this person is and how well you know him or her. It will also provide you with information about what's important to that person.

Call: On several student volunteers and ask those students (one at a time) to stand and read aloud the answers written in the booklet he/she has. This is to be done without using their suspected booklet person's name or directly looking at the suspected booklet's owner.

Ask: Other student's to point to the person as soon as they think they know whose paper is being read. No shout outs please!

Tell: Students there is no need for anyone to confirm or deny student guesses.

Part 3

Announce: You all did a very nice job with this part of the activity. Part of it was serious and some parts made us laugh and smile. That's just how this activity is supposed to go and it's also has something to do with one of the reasons why you might go see a counselor some day....

Instruct & Ask: Student's to look at the "*program*" in their possession and to think about under what other circumstances might they be handed a program with this kind of information?

Ask: "Raise your hand if you've ever been to a *friend* or family member's funeral/memorial service before?"

Ask: "Who was there, Family, Friends, Classmates and Teachers?"

What music was being played?

Was there a picture of that person on display?

Did anyone share their favorite memory of that person?

Did anyone talk about that person's personality or what he/she was like?

Did anyone speak towards what that person was meant to do in life or what he/she loved to do?

Was there a favorite quote, expression or religious passage in the program?

Were there flowers present?

Announce: If you're feeling surprised or shocked about now then you'll kind of know what I'm talking about! Nobody ever sees this kind of thing coming...that's why it's a shock. That's why funerals are really hard to deal with. Kind of leaves your head spinning. That's why it's hard to wrap your mind around it and get a handle on it.

State: "The funeral is the beginning of learning how to live the rest of our lives without that person."

Monologue: Your own experience with loss and add to it as needed to cover the unspoken experiences of many listeners. (I use my experience with my Grandma.)

Reassure: Student's that it's normal to feel sad, upset, angry, lonely & empty in side when we've lost someone close and that's its also normal to cry, forget things, not sleep well and not be able to concentrate very well after we've lost someone too.

State: You'll know if you're having a hard time getting a handle on your loss if you find your sadness, anger and sorrow *all over the place* especially if it's been *quite a while* since you've lost that person.

Explain: That the phrase *all over the place* refers to places and situations not always appropriate or desired for missing someone. For example: At a friend's birthday party, at school, at work, on a picnic, listening to music with friends, while playing a sporting activity or taking a math test. These are not the best or most desired places to have our emotions spill out.

Clarify: The phrase *quite a while*. Explain that quite a while might have different meanings for different people. Having your feelings all over the place for hours, days, weeks and months is pretty typical. As time goes by and we're getting better at learning how to live the rest of our lives without that person, we'll find our feelings are not all over the place as much anymore.

Example: I know I have a good handle on losing my grandma because I've got pretty good control over when, where & how much time I want to spend missing her. This is how I handle that: I've got a box at home in my closet with stuff that reminds me of my Grandma. Stuff like pictures, toys, and some letters she had written me. Every now and then but mostly at

Christmas and on my Birthday, I'll pull out that box of stuff and just sit there by myself remembering. I'll get sad, cry, talk to her in my head (sometimes out loud,) laugh a little bit and mostly just allow myself that experience. When it's time for me to go do something else, I pack it all away until the next time and that's where it stays until I'm ready again=)

State/Ask: Raise your hand if you think pretty often about someone you've lost.

Call: On a student to share whose funeral and how long ago that funeral happened.

(Caution) Be mindful. It's not uncommon for kids to have their sadness show up during this activity. You can see it in their eyes. Proceed with great caution. Don't be surprised by students volunteering to share their information as a means of emotionally dealing with their loss.

Ask: "Do you think you've got a good handle on that most the time?"

Repeat: With several students.

Offer: To be of service to help anyone with getting a handle on loss now or in the future.

Instruct: Student's to hand up/pass forward the programs for your review.

(Handout Below)

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Write 3 positive words that describe your personality.

Name 4 of the best teachers you've ever had.

First names of 5 others in this classroom you would have liked to become friends with.

Write down the names of your 2 favorite songs or *theme songs*.

Write down the #1 thing you think you're *meant* or *supposed* to do in life.

If you were a flower which one would you be? Ex. *Rose*

42

16 15

The first names of up to 6 important friends you could handle being stranded with.

If you were *Lost*, write down the first names of up to 7 family members you could count on. (ex. Brother-Charlie)

Describe a favorite picture of yourself.

Write down your favorite quote, saying, expression, passage, poem or *lucky numbers*.

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