

A RESOURCE
FROM
NACG
MEMBERS



Individual Student Bereavement Support Plan

Endorsed by:



COALITION *to* SUPPORT
GRIEVING STUDENTS

Individual Student Bereavement Plan



This document is a resource for supporting students returning to school after they have experienced the death of a significant person in their lives. When a student returns to school, they may feel alone and challenged by the task of engaging with their daily routine. Schools are in a unique position to provide support for students with thoughtful plans specific to the individual's needs. Students grieve developmentally, and their needs are unique and changing throughout the days, months, and years ahead. Those students that need and receive grief support have improved outcomes socially, emotionally, and academically.

The child must be included in discussions and decision-making relating to their Individual Student Bereavement Plan.

Considerations for Strengths

A student's interpersonal strengths and personal network of family and friends will contribute to responsive support during the grieving process. These factors are helpful to note when developing an Individual Bereavement Support Plan.

- Hopeful Attitude
 - Personal Resilience
 - Ability to Maintain Daily Routine
 - Sense of Meaning and Purpose
 - Sense of Wellbeing
 - Satisfaction with End-of-Life Care Received by Deceased
 - Involvement in Meaningful Activities
 - Ability to Express Feelings, Including Crying
 - Feels Support from Family and Friends
 - Grief Support in Place
 - Mental Health Support in Place
- Other:

Considerations for Risk

Students may respond to death cognitively, socially, emotionally, and/or physically. Considering risk involves looking at factors that can cause grief reactions to be more severe. Utilize school district policy for guidance on addressing risk.

- Limited social support
 - Sudden and/or unexpected death
 - Had shared classes or extracurricular activities
 - Had a recent relationship with the deceased
 - Active social, emotional, or academic stressors
 - Changes in social, emotional, or academic behaviors
 - Difficulty coping with past or present stressors
 - Multiple deaths experienced
 - Multiple secondary losses
(Divorce, incarceration, foster care)
 - Distant and/or conflicted relationship with deceased
 - Current or past history of substance abuse
 - Current or past history of mental illness
 - Current or past history of self harm
 - Suicidal ideation or previous suicide attempts
 - Guilt and/or confusion about death or care provided before the death
- Other:

Potential supporting strategies

Possible strategies to consider when developing accommodations for the student:

Environmental Strategies

- Seat student near the teacher
- Seat student near the door –
- implement signal in case a break is needed
- Uphold classroom routine, structure, and expectations
- Consider all the locations that the student may need support and identify strategies for each (eg: cafeteria, recess, transportation etc.)

Lesson Presentation Strategies

- Check-in for understanding/review
- Test-taking strategies
- Allow extra time for the exam

Assignment Strategies

- Give extra time to complete assignments
- Implement flexibility as needed
- Clarify prioritization within assignments
 - Be aware of assignments that involve death and adjust as needed.

Support Staff Strategies

- Provide grief support options.

Behavioral Strategies

- Keep classroom rules simple, visible, and clear

Break Strategies

- Utilize non-verbal signals or code words for teacher-student communication to indicate the need for a break
- Allow student open pass for counselor/social worker/nurse for support

School/Classroom Events

- Provide choice for participation or an alternative option in special projects or holiday activities that may remind the student who is grieving of their loved one (e.g., Mother's Day, Father's Day)
- Use inclusive language (e.g., caregiver or grown-up instead of parent, mom, or dad)

Individual Student Bereavement Plan

Form Created By:

Student

Guardian

School staff

Other:

Other:

Date Completed

Once completed, share a copy with:

Family. Please list:

Teacher(s). Please list:

Student record for current and future reference.

Others who the plan may be shared with:

(In working together to create this plan we agree to treat as confidential all information shared outside of those listed above.)

It is recommended that this plan is updated with each school transition, additional death, or annually as needed.

Date Updated:

School Enrollment Updated:

School Support Team Members Updated:

Individual Student Bereavement Plan

Data Collected

Student name:

School:

Grade:

Members of student support team:

School-based supports in place at the time of death:

Primary family contact regarding the death:

Name of person who died:

Relationship to student:

Date of death:

Cause of death:

Cultural or religious considerations:

Significant dates to consider (future end-of-life ceremonies, deceased person's birthday, special occasions, ...):

Other details that are helpful for school staff to know and family has given permission to share: (use additional paper as needed)

Individual Student Bereavement Plan

Plan / Interventions:

Short Term:

Long Term:



Accommodations and/or modifications for student, family and school staff to consider and discuss: (use additional paper as needed)

Please note that the Individual Bereavement Support Plan is a) not a legally binding document; or b) not associated in any way with special education (IEP) or 504 accommodation plans. Individualized bereavement plans can be designed, used, and adapted for any student to support coordination with the caregiver and relevant educators that work with the student.

This document is part of NACG Grieffalk : A Toolkit for Supporting Students who are Grieving. Please visit www.childrengrieve for other tools to support your work with students who are grieving.

Thank you to the following NACG members who contributed to this resource: (Listed alphabetically by last name.)

Sara Asch, The Center for Grieving Children, Portland, ME
 Nicole Barnes, LICSW, Park Nicollet Growing Through Grief, St. Louis Park, MN
 Diane Carlson LMSW, CBC, Hospice & Palliative Care Foundation, Spartanburg, SC
 Liz Carson, Kate's Club, Atlanta, GA
 Katie Wilberding Cross, LCSW, Judi's House, Denver, CO
 Timothy Dearhamer, LCSW, The Tristesse Grief Center, Tulsa, OK
 Allyson England Drake, M.Ed, CT, Full Circle Grief Center, Richmond, VA
 Michelle Gonzalez, MS, Uplift Center for Grieving Children, Philadelphia, PA
 Michelle Halm, MA, M.Ed., CT, Pillars Community Health, La Grange, IL
 Kelsey Hoepfer, LPC, NCC, CT, Willow House, Bannockburn, IL
 David C. Joswick, BS, MS Executive Dir. New Hope for Kids, Maitland, FL
 Laura Moore, EdD, CHES, CCLS, The Harbor Lights Foundation, Rye, NY
 Lisa Moreno, M.Ed., M.A., LPC, RDT, CSC, NCC, Children's Bereavement Center Rio Grande Valley, Harlingen, TX
 Jessi Morgan, LMSW, Communities In Schools of the Permian Basin, Midland, TX
 Camille Gerace Nitschky, Executive Director, Children's Grief Center GLBR, Midland, MI
 Buffy Peters, Hamilton's Academy of Grief & Loss, Des Moines, IA
 Jessica Porte, The Elizabeth Hospice, Escondido, CA
 Therese Ross, M.S., Executive Director, Rick's Place, Wilbraham, MA
 Rachel Saffer, LCSW-S, The Austin Center for Grief and Loss, Austin, TX
 Elizabeth M. Sergent M.Ed, M.A., Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, Charlotte, NC
 Colleen Shannon, LICSW, The Children's Room, Center for Grieving Children and Teens, Arlington, MA
 Shawn T. Sledzianowski, NCC, LPC, CT, Highmark Caring Place, Warrendale, PA
 Mandi Zucker, LSW, CT, Inner Harbor, Westfield, NJ

NACG Staff Team:

Adam Carter, PhD, LCPC, NCC, CCMHC, ACS, TF, National Clinical Director
 Deirdra Flavin, MSc, CFRE, National Marketing & Development Director
 Vicki Jay, Chief Executive Officer
 Megan Lopez, MSW, LMSW, National Program Director

This toolkit was created with philanthropic investment from our partner the [New York Life Foundation](http://www.newyorklife.org).



NEW YORK LIFE
 FOUNDATION

The Individual Bereavement Support Plan has been endorsed by the Coalition to Support Grieving Students. The coalition is a unique collaboration of the leading professional organizations representing classroom teachers, principals, assistant principals, superintendents, school board members, and central office staff, student support personnel, and other school professionals who have come together with a common conviction: grieving students need the support and care of the school community.

The Coalition’s purpose is to create and share a set of industry-endorsed resources that will empower school communities across America in the ongoing support of their grieving students and we are proud to have this resource endorsed by this group.



Lead Founding Members



Founding Members

