

Week 3 – Caring for and understanding others at a time of loss & grief

<p>Aims – The lesson will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore how best to show care and understanding to others while they are going through the process of loss and grief. • Examine the difference between ‘empathy’ and ‘sympathy’ • Look at the helpful things one could do or say to support someone who is grieving. 	<p>Objectives – At the end of the lesson the student will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how best to show their care and understanding to someone who is feeling a sense of loss or grief. • Understand the difference between showing empathy Vs sympathy to someone in the context of supporting them. • Have a better sense of the more helpful things to say or do when supporting a friend who has suffered loss and a sense of things that might be best avoided. • Reflect on their learning in class, on what they are grateful for and what they feel positive about
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Resources needed – Powerpoint, worksheets

Introduction – Recap briefly on the stages of grief and the idea of grief being a process and coming in waves. At a time of loss and grief for someone we care about sometimes it can be difficult to know what to say or do to support them. Often we are afraid we will say the wrong thing or upset them further. It is natural to want to make them feel better but it isn’t always possible to do that. In this class will also look at how best to support others who are feeling a sense of loss/grief. In the next class we will focus on how we can care for ourselves.

Powerpoint Presentation

Activity 1 - Group Activity – Divide the class into groups of 3/4 and seat them so that they are socially distanced. Appoint a student to feed back the ideas of the group to the class. Read through the questions on the worksheet for the video clip before they watch it so they are focused on what they need to discuss afterward in their group. After they have watched the video clip give them 6/7 minutes to discuss the questions and come up with their answers as a group. Spend 10 mins taking feedback from the groups. To adapt to digital group work see guidelines on https://www.jct.ie/wholeschool/pdf_strategies_for_active_engagement/assigning_group_roles.pdf

Video – ‘How to help a grieving friend’ Megan Devine (3.98 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l2zLCCRT-nE&t=36s>

Worksheet -

“The way to help people to feel better is to let them be in pain”

Why do you think the speaker says this? (*Student ideas*)

What does the speaker say about ‘Acknowledgement’? (*It makes things better even when they can’t be made right, also you can’t heal somebody’s pain by trying to take it away from them.*)

What are the things people sometimes say or do that may not be helpful for someone who is grieving? (*Saying look on the bright side, trying to make people feel better, giving advice, trying to cheer people up*)

List some of the things that the speaker says might be helpful. (*Being heard helps, acknowledgement of how bad things are, to be able to say how it feels without being talked out of it, saying ‘I’m sorry that’s happening, tell me about it.’*)

Activity 2 - Video – ‘Empathy vs Sympathy’ Brené Browne (2.53 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwgu369Jw&t=21s>

Worksheet - Watch the video clip and together with your groups make note of 3 key points she makes about ‘Empathy’

Points may include – It is about perspective not judgement, it is recognizing the emotions of others and in others. It is feeling with people, connecting with the feeling within ourselves. Rarely does a response make something better, what makes things better is connection. It’s about saying ‘I don’t even know what to say right now, I’m just glad you told me’.

Teacher – It is important to mention that not everyone who is going through loss or has gone through it wants to talk about it and that is fine. Encourage students to think about the different ways that they can be of support to each other.

Activity 3 - Group Activity – In your groups try to come up with as many ideas as you can that would be helpful when supporting a friend who might be going through loss or grief –

- Helpful things I could do
- Helpful things I could say
- Things I should avoid doing
- Things I should avoid saying

Use the following document to prompt them or to give examples –
https://www.dougy.org/docs/Your_Friend_is_Grieving.pdf

To adapt to digital group work see guidelines on
https://www.jct.ie/wholeschool/pdf_strategies_for_active_engagement/assigning_group_roles.pdf

Reflection Sheet – Each student fills up the sheet – 3 things I learned today, 3 things I am grateful for today & 3 reasons to smile today.

Teacher Resources

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ie/blog/partnering-in-mental-health/201408/brown-empathy-vs-sympathy-0>