

CORNERSTONE 2019 RESOURCE

Grief at Camp: Dealing with Grief-Related Sadness in Real Time *Elective*

AUTHOR(S):	Sara Beth Berman & Natalie Rothstein
SUMMARY:	Making space at camp to remember people who have died can be touchy, challenging work. There are some really deep feelings that come in the days, weeks, months, and years after a loss, and feeling those feelings at camp can be stressful for both the mourner, and their community. In this session, you will learn practical tools for managing grief, empathy, and all of the related emotions in real time at camp. - <i>Submitted by Sara Beth Berman & Natalie Rothstein</i>
TOPIC(S):	Grief, Mental Health, Building Community
LEARNING OBJECTIVE:	<p>Knowledge and Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants will know how to approach creation of safer/brave space. • Participants will be able to share about their loss in a safer/brave space. • Participants will have methodology around managing loss at camp with their campers and costaff.
AUDIENCE:	All-staff, small staff, bunk, unit
TIMING:	90 Minutes
APPENDICES:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natalie Rothstein Resource sheet (below) • Harry Potter Sees Thestrals https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7Cyyb0jk7Q • Rob Delaney video clip - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8S7VhG-Wuw&time_continue=1&app=desktop
MATERIALS NEEDED:	<p>Supplies</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Construction paper 2. Plain white copy paper 3. Watercolors (10 palettes) 4. Brushes (enough for 25 people) 5. 5 Cups for water 6. Paper towels 7. Markers 8. Paint markers 9. Projector / HDMI cable 10. Screen / projector
SET-UP DETAILS:	Tables with flat surfaces for crafting Projector/AV hookup

Broad Subject and Skills

- Remembering those who are no longer with us is an important part of processing post-loss.
- Judaism provides a thoughtful framework for remembering those who have died.
- Those who have not experienced loss can still make space for those who are going through grief.

Understanding

- Communities are formed by people from a variety of backgrounds and experiences.
- People in our community may carry heavy emotional baggage.
- Every member of the community has a responsibility to every other member of the community - but how they take on that responsibility varies from person to person
- Spending time dealing with our feelings around death (in general) and a death that has impacted us (specifically) is time well-spent, even if it's challenging.

Essential Questions

- What baggage do people bring to camp - other than their duffels?
- What sort of grief might you find at camp?
- How can we best manage these challenges at camp?
- Who, besides me, provides emotional and grief support at my camp?
- What can I do to help remember people's people?

Knowledge and Skills

- Participants will know how to approach creation of safer/brave space.
- Participants will be able to share about their loss in a safer/brave space.
- Participants will have methodology around managing loss at camp with their campers and costaff.

Guidelines

1. We will listen
2. We will hear
3. We will share what we want to share
4. We will not judge
5. We will hold space

SESSION TIMELINE & OUTLINE:

Activity (90 minutes)

1. Grabber - Thestrals (15 minutes)
 - a. Safer/brave space - we're in a space to share and grieve a little. This space is a brave space, one for holding space, one for remembering people who are no longer in our physical space. Since we're all grown ups, and this is a challenging space, if you need to take a walk or get a drink of water - go for it. We're going to share memories here that may be sad to share, and that's ok. I am sorry for your loss.
 - b. Video - Harry Potter Sees Thestrals
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7Cyyb0jk7Q>
 - c. Discussion:
 - i. How does this clip from *Harry Potter* relate to building empathy?
 - ii. What about watching this clip from *Harry Potter* is hard for you, and why?
 - iii. How can empathy help us make space for the members of our camp communities?
 - iv. Think about a time when you were the only one in the room who could see Thestrals, what was that experience like for you?

2. Activity (60 minutes):
 - a. Think - Pair - Share (10 minutes): Please think of a time when you or someone in your community experienced the death of a loved one, and prepare to share with a neighbor.
 - b. Rob Delaney video clip (15 minutes - video start time - end time: 828-1350)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K8S7VhG-Wuw&time_continue=1&app=desktop
 - i. A note on using video clips: In an educational session, videos are meant to teach, to spark interest, and to move participants. We're choosing to show you a clip of this video (the whole link is available to you) because research has shown that 7 minutes is the amount of time needed to make the impact you need to make with a video clip.
 1. Discussion questions:
 - a. How do you feel after hearing Rob Delaney talk about his grief?
 - b. When were you in a space where somebody was feeling like Rob, and how did you respond? How would you respond now that you've spent more time thinking about the other person's or people's experience/s?
 - c. Grayness of Grief (20 minutes):
 - i. Teaching- the grayness of grief - the grieving process is not black and white. It's gray and everyone goes at their own pace. There's no one way to grieve and it's important to be flexible and to avoid having expectations of how someone might grieve.
 - ii. Preparation - what are things you can do to prepare (ie talking with directors, unit heads, guardians)
 1. Work with you leadership team ahead of time if possible to understand more about:
 - a. Where the individual is in their grief process
 - b. Accurate information about what happened
 - c. Comfort level talking about the loss
 - d. Individual's boundaries
 - iii. Tools for Supporting Community Members Who are Grieving (share handout with tools with participants and read through and open up space for questions)
 - d. Crafting Your Feelings (15 minutes):
 - i. Cards - have someone who could use your support? Make them a card to show you care.
 - ii. Art activity to express emotions - use watercolors as a way to express what you're feeling
3. Debrief Questions (15 minutes):
 - a. What did you like about this activity?
 - b. What was one thing you didn't know about grief that you learned today?
 - c. What do you think will change in your practice of dealing with grief at camp?
 - d. Who are the people at your camp that can help you address these issues?
 - e. How will your own mourning and remembrances change in the future, based on this session?

Tools for Supporting Community Members Who Are Grieving

- **Show Empathy:** Let the community member know you're there for them (grief can be very isolating and make it difficult for people to say that they need support).
- **Ask:** When it's comfortable, ask them what support looks like for them.
- **Be thoughtful of language:**
 - Harsh language around death can be very painful for people who are grieving
 - Particularly challenging words: killed, murder, committed suicide
 - More comfortable words: passed away, lost their life, died by suicide
- **Be sensitive to triggers:**
 - Grief is gray and different things may trigger people to feel different intense emotions – even though the triggers may not make sense or be clear to others.
- **Checking in:** Regularly ask the person “How are you, today?” – the emphasis on today is important because each day can feel different.
- **Permission:** Give yourself permission not to know what to say – we won't always have the answers and there isn't usually a solution, listening and providing space for someone to feel supported is often incredibly helpful.
- **Follow Their Lead:** Everyone's grieving process looks different, give room to follow the person's lead and notice where they're at.