



Responding to Student Questions Regarding a Student Death



For more information contact
SD44 SEL/MH Team - Nov 2024

For Teachers and Staff

When responding to student questions about a student death, it's important to provide a supportive and compassionate response. The tone should be calm, empathetic, and patient, allowing students to express their feelings and ask questions when they need to.

1. **Acknowledge Emotions:**

- "I know this is a sad time, and it's okay to feel upset or confused."
- "It's normal to feel a lot of different emotions right now."

2. **Provide Honest, Age-Appropriate Information:**

- "We don't always know why these things happen, but it's okay to feel sad or wonder about it."
- "Sometimes people die or things happen that we can't know about in advance or predict or change."

3. **Reassure Students:**

- "You are safe here. I can support you as you work through these feelings."
- "Everyone may react differently, and that's okay. Some might feel quiet, others might cry, and some might not know how to talk about it."

4. **Encourage Expression:**

- "If you want to talk about how you're feeling, we can talk about it. You can also draw pictures or write letters if that helps."
- "If you have questions, I'll do my best to answer them, and if I don't know the answer, that's okay too."

5. **Remind Students of Support Resources:**

- "We have a school counsellor available to talk to if you need someone to help you through this."
- "It's important to talk to a grown-up if you need help, whether it's your family or a counsellor."

6. **Respect Different Beliefs and Feelings:**

- "People may have different beliefs about what happens when someone dies. It's okay to have your own feelings about it."
- "We all grieve in different ways, and it's important to be kind to each other during this time."

7. Maintain Routine and Stability:

- "While this is a sad time, we'll keep doing our work and have time for fun and learning too."
- "It's important to remember that we can still be kind to each other and take care of ourselves and others."

Note to Staff – If you have a student(s) who continues to have questions or concerns about the topic of death or suicide, please contact the school counsellor.