



enote

Dear VAPT members,

I hope you are having a good summer. Nearly 70 people gathered to hear Dr. Esther Hess discuss ways to use the DIR/Floortime approach with children with autism on June 14th and 15th. Photos of our conference may be viewed at:

<https://picasaweb.google.com/106348738743995626392/June2013VAPTSummerConferenceHess?authkey=Gv1sRgCPD97L7V7P6DwgE&noredirect=1#>

Summertime starts off with a special treat for me -I teach a class in play therapy! This year I had a delightful crew! Our VAPT FB page will feature some of the materials they found --be on the lookout for favorites from this talented group! Marie Johnson completed her project about resources for children who are grieving. With her permission, I am sharing the materials with you in this enote and the VAPT webpage.

Many of the graduate students in the class also helped out at our state conference. THANKS to Chauncy, Greg, and (pictured below) Mariel, Marie, Marlana, and Jess!

Playfully,

Anne



Other news!

Upcoming VAPT Training

Watch your email, VAPT website, and VAPT FB for more details!

SAVE-THE-DATE

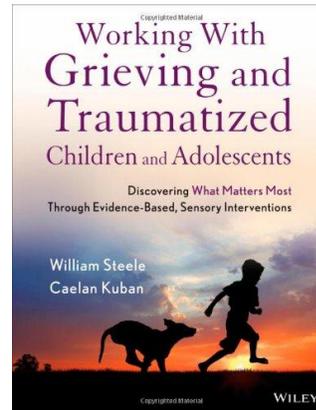
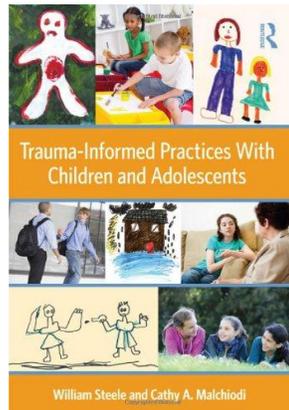
Dr. Bill Steele, PsyD, MSW

January 16 and 17, 2014

VAPT Winter Workshop

Richmond, Virginia

Dr. Steele is Founder of the National Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children (TLC) and co-author of the following books.



See the following website to learn more about TLC's evidence-based treatments!
<http://www.starrtraining.org/trauma-and-children>

You can begin or continue to accrue Certified Level One and Level Two Trauma Specialist credits with the workshops he is planning!! Thanks to the VAPT BOD and Lisa Wright and Jan Williamson for advocating for this offering.

Children and Grief: A Resource Guide

Although the world is full of sorrow it is full also of the overcoming of it. ~Helen Keller

Common Myths about Children and Grief:

- **Children do not really grieve because they are too young to understand death.**
Reality: Although children's grief may look different from adult's grief, children and adults experience similar emotional and physical pain reactions to the loss of a significant loved one.
- **Children should be sheltered from the pain of death and grief.**
Reality: Although it is natural for parents to want to shield children from painful experiences, children will naturally grieve and it is important that adults create a space that allows them to go through the grieving process.

- **Funerals and memorial services are not appropriate for children and may actually traumatize them.**

Reality: Children’s opinions regarding attending funerals should be listened to and valued, and they should be given the opportunity to attend funerals if they want to. Funerals provide a time for the child to emotionally and physically express their feeling, say goodbye to the deceased, and begin the healing process.

- **Children are “naturally resilient” and will “bounce back” after a loss.**

Reality: The ability of children to cope with loss is largely dependent on a variety of factors including: coexisting stress, the child’s conceptual understanding and beliefs about death, age of the child, and support systems. Bowlby’s work on attachment suggests children are in fact “more susceptible to profound emotional scarring after experiencing a significant loss.”

(Taken from Fiorelli, 2010)

In a mining report published by the Association for Play Therapy, Helen Benedict (2008) distinguishes two types of bereavement: uncomplicated and complicated. Complicated bereavement occurs when the death is associated with trauma or some sort of stigma. Uncomplicated bereavement is the normally occurring process of grief following the death of a significant person. During uncomplicated bereavement, children who are parented in a “good enough” manner are not at later risk for developmental psychopathology. For children experiencing complicated bereavement, therapy is imperative. Benedict (2008) outlines the following therapeutic approach:

- Step 1 Provide information about death and grieving to prevent misunderstandings that may arise from the child’s developmental status.
- Step 2 Focus on the loss. Specifically, what the child misses about the lost relationship and any ambivalent or conflicted feelings toward the deceased.
- Step 3 Memory work to deal with traumatic memories and form positive memories of the deceased.
- Step 4 Redefine the relationship with the deceased in the here and now i.e. a memory-based relationship.

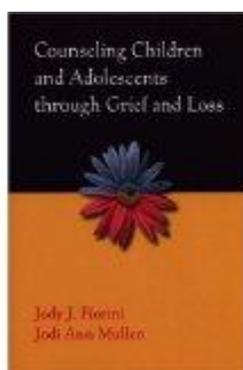
Technique for working with children who are grieving: Although simple, creating a collage is a great way to help children use free association. The child can use magazines, photos, greeting cards, letters, and anything else they would like to include. Afterward talk with the child about what they chose to include and share about what they see in their collage.

Age	Concepts and Beliefs
Birth- 2 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No understanding of death • Child does not have words for feelings • Aware of the absence of loved one • Notices changes in routine • Notices changes in family emotions

3-5 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No understanding of permanence of death • To be dead is to be sleeping or on a trip • May wonder what deceased is doing • May wonder what will happen if the other parent dies • Magical thinking and fantasies, often worse than realities
6-9 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands that death is final • Interested in the biology of death • Death associated with bodily harm, mutilation & decay • His or her thoughts, actions, or words caused the death • Death is punishment • Forming spiritual concepts • “Who will care for me if my caregiver dies” • Thinks about life’s milestones without the deceased (graduation, marriage, etc.)
9-12 Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the finality of death • Denial • May believe his/her words, thoughts, or actions caused the death • Thinks about life’s milestones without the deceased (graduation, marriage, etc.) • High death awareness (death may happen again) • “What if my caregiver dies?” • Formulating spiritual concepts
12 Years and up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the finality & universality of death • Denial • May believe his/her words, thoughts, or actions caused the death • Thinks about life’s milestones without the deceased (graduation, marriage, etc.) • High death awareness (death may happen again) • May sense own impending death • “I need to be in control of feelings,” “If I show my feelings, I will be weak” • Internal conflict about dependence & desiring independence • May utilize spiritual concepts to cope

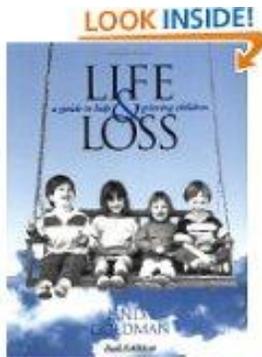
2004 M. Lyles, www.childgrief.org

PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES



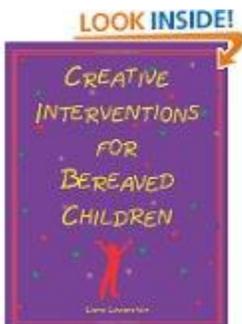
Fiorini, J., & Mullen, J. A. (2006). *Counseling Children and Adolescents Through Grief and Loss*. Champaign, IL: Research Press.

The book synthesizes current research and best-practice approaches for counseling children and adolescents who have experienced a wide range of grief and loss including moving and divorce. It provides a method for assessing individual needs and offers guidelines for selecting appropriate counseling strategies.



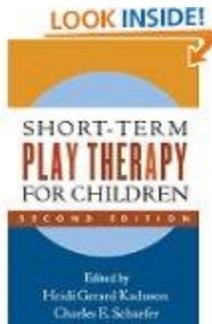
Goldman, L. (1994). *Life and loss: A guide to helping grieving children*. Bristol, PA: Accelerated Development.

This book assists the reader in recognizing and understanding different types of childhood losses. It lays out the four psychological tasks of grief, as well as how to help a child say good-bye to a dying loved one. The author explains the techniques of grief work, providing useful tools, ideas, and inventories for educators to discover ways for kids to commemorate loss.



Lowenstein, L. (2006). *Creative Interventions for Bereaved Children*. Champion Press: New York.

This book provides a myriad of interventions that have been specially designed to engage children in counseling, and help them approach their grief within the context of a safe therapeutic environment.



Oaklander, V. (2000). Short-term Gestalt play therapy for grieving children. In H. G. Kaduson & C. E. Schaefer (Eds.). *Short-term play therapy for children*. New York: NY: The Guilford Press, p. 28-52.

Fiorelli, R. (2010). Grief and bereavement in children. In B. Kinzbrunner & J. Policzer's *End of Life Care, Second Edition*. McGraw Hill: New York.

This chapter discusses:

- Children's concepts of death and responses to grief
- Normal and complicated grief reactions in children and teenagers
- Preparing a child for the death of a loved one
- Guidelines for helping bereaved children and teens express their grief
- Guidelines for self-care of grieving parents
- Guidelines for attending funerals and memorials
- Death of a sibling
- Also includes extensive list of books for teens and children

PDF available for download at:

<http://www.mhprofessional.com/downloads/products/0071545271/kinz27.pdf>

Compassion books

This website includes over 400 books, cds, and dvds to help grieving children, teens, and adults. All resources are reviewed and selected by knowledgeable professionals. The website is nicely laid out and easy to navigate. You can find a variety of resources such as workbooks/ journals, books on the topics such as loss of a pet or how to handle holidays, and resources for professional development.

<http://www.compassionbooks.com/>

Helping Bereaved Children: 20 Activities for Processing Grief

This website was authored by Imhoff, Vance, and Quackenbush and offers 20 easy-to-implement activities when working with children who are grieving.

<http://www.allohiocc.org/Resources/Documents/AOCC%202012%20Session%2062.pdf>

National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement (NCSCB)

NCSCB provides guidance to parents and school professionals who are responding to the needs of students and staff after a loss. This website provides practical guidelines, tip sheets, and training modules. It includes a terrific Powerpoint presentation to give to teachers about how to support grieving students and even provides the presenter's notes! Additionally, the site provides brochures for parents in multiple languages.

<http://www.stchristophershospital.com/pediatric-specialties-programs/specialties/690>

National Association for School Psychologists (NASP)

The following are links from NASP's *Helping Children at Home and in School* and are wonderful informational handouts to provide to parents and school staff about children's grief:

Death and Grief: Supporting Children and Youth

http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/deathgrief.pdf

Helping Children Cope With Loss, Death, and Grief Tips for Teachers and Parents

http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/griefwar.pdf

Death and Grief in the Family: Tips for Parents

http://www.nasponline.org/resources/principals/nasp_griefparents.pdf

RESOURCES FOR CHILDREN

Professor Child

www.professorchild.com

This website is designed to develop educational films and workbooks for children experiencing challenging life events, and focuses on helping children teach other children. Of particular interest on this website is a documentary style video titled *Children and Grief*. The film focuses on the child's perspective and is helpful for a child looking for a way to relate to a peer and work through grief. The film is available in digital download or DVD and comes with a free downloadable companion workbook for \$34.99.

A trailer of the video can be found on the website or on Youtube at:
<http://professorchild.com/products-page/videos/children-and-grief/?gclid=CMj3qanUyLcCFVLxOgodpUEA|w>

Kids Said

This supportive website is designed for kids to help each other deal with loss and grief.
www.kidsaid.com

Bibliotherapy Resources

Preschool and Early Elementary

Last Week My Brother Anthony Died by M.W. Hickman (1984)

A poignant, ultimately upbeat story told through the eyes of a girl whose infant brother died of congenital heart disease. The family minister provides support for the grieving family.

Lifetimes by Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen (1983)

This simply written and informative book about life cycles is ideal for parents and children to read and discuss together. It describes lifetimes for different living things as well as lifetimes that are shortened due to unusual circumstances.

A Quilt for Elizabeth by B. Tiffault (1992)

After a girl's father gets sick and dies, the girl and her grandmother decide to make a quilt from her father's garments. This highly recommended book creatively deals with loss and mourning.

Samantha Jane's Missing Smile: Coping with the Loss of a Parent by Julie Kaplow, Donna Pincus, and Beth Spiegel (2007)

After her father dies, Sammy Jane doesn't know how to express her grief. With the help of a neighbor, she learns to express her feelings and accept her loss. This book is appropriate for children up to age twelve.

Elementary School

Dusty Was My Friend by A. F. Claudy (1984)

This is a beautiful, well-told story of an eight-year-old boy whose ten-year-old friend dies in a car accident. This is an excellent book for anyone who has lost a close friend.

Emily's Sadhappy Season by S. Lowden-Golightly (1993)

This is an excellent story about a little girl's reaction to the sudden death of her father from a heart attack. The story is realistic and portrays honest and sincere emotional responses to loss. At the end of the book there are some helpful tips for children grieving the death of a parent.

Grandpa Abe by Marisabina Russo (1996)

The story follows the course of events in a relationship between a grandfather and grandchild. When the grandfather dies, a funeral is held where family members comfort one another.

Mustard by C. Graeber (1982)

This excellent story about the aging and death of a cat is highly recommended for its realism and sensitivity.

A Taste of Blackberries by D. B. Smith (2004)

The story of a little boy whose best friend dies and his struggles to come to terms with the loss. The story covers the events leading up to the death, the loss, and the funeral. With the help of adults, there is some resolution of the loss.

Late Elementary/Middle school

Bridge to Terabithia by K. Paterson (1979)

A well-told novel about a boy and girl who become friends and build a tree house together. While the girl is visiting the tree house on her own, she falls in a creek and dies. The boy's reaction to her death is accurately portrayed but is somewhat brief.

Lanky Longlegs by K. Lorenzen (1983)

This prize-winning book is about a girl who experiences the death of her brother and the birth of her dog's puppies. Appropriate for children who experience any kind of loss.

Sun & Spoon by Kevin Henkes (1997)

This thoughtful, well-written book describes how a ten-year-old boy deals with the death of his grandmother in a constructive way.

You Shouldn't Have to Say Goodbye by P. Hermes (1982)

A touching story of a young girl's struggle to deal with her mother's imminent death.

For Middle-school children

Beat the Turtle Drum by C. Greene (1976)

A beautiful story about the love and friendship between two sisters. When the younger one dies after falling out of a tree, the older one (thirteen years old) describes her feelings in a very honest and realistic manner. An excellent book for children who have lost a sibling.

Tiger Eyes by Judy Blume (1987)

This excellent book is about a fourteen-year-old girl whose father is shot in a store robbery. The story describes the attempt by her, the mother, and the younger brother to cope with the loss in the course of a year. (Also appropriate for high school students.)

Puggy Brown Ears' Purr Song by Linda Fausey (2005)

This is a beautifully illustrated book about a cat's loss of his best cat friend. The message is paradoxical: the loved one is a part of you and you can keep the memory of the loved one inside you, but you also have to let it go in order to move through the grieving process. A good resource for children ages 8 to early adolescence who like cats.

High School Students

After Suicide: Living with the Questions by Eileen Kuehn (2001)

This book provides a definition of suicide and describes its effects on survivors and the stages of grieving. It suggests ways teens can cope with suicide and heal.

A Matter of Time by R. Schotter (1979)

A very moving, beautifully written book about a high school girl coping with her mother's illness and anticipated death.

A Time to Mourn, A Time to Comfort by Rachmiel Tobesman (2008)

This nonfiction guide for children explains Jewish mourning rituals and customs. It also helps children understand their feelings about loss, discusses how to manage their feelings and suggests whom to lean on for support.

What Do I Do: When Teenagers Deal with Death by Steven Gerali (2009)

This book offers a Christian perspective on the death of a teen or other loved one. It describes different causes of death (sudden, due to terminal illness) and provides suggestions on coping with death. Includes bible verses.

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

<http://www.dougy.org/>

The Dougy Center: The National Center for Grieving Children and Families

This website provides information about how to help grieving children. One of the most useful parts of this website is that it has a support group locator which can help parents find a support group in their area.

<http://childgrief.org/childgrief.htm>

Children's Grief Education Association (CGEA)

This is a great website! The CGEA offers great resources to help parents support and care for children who are grieving the loss of a loved one. It includes a local support group locator, support for military families, information on how to talk to children about death, information to help understand children's grief, resources for single fathers, a children's page, a teen's page, etc.

<http://www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities/toolkits/tlc/griefresources>

This website provides a variety of resources for parents to support children who are grieving.

<http://www.jennadruckcenter.org/grief-resources/94-12-activities-you-can-do-with-your-grieving-child.html>

12 Activities You Can Do with your Grieving Child by Rochelle Perper

This site provides activities parents can do with their children to help them express their feelings.

Books for Parents

Good Grief Rituals: Tools for Healing by Elaine Childs-Gowell (2011)

In this comforting and deeply thoughtful book, the author offers a series of simple grief rituals, among them the venting of feelings, letter writing, affirmations, and exercises to act out negative emotions as well as forgiveness, fantasies, meditations, etc.

Talking About Death: A Dialogue Between Parent and Child by Earl A. Grollman

A practical guide for parents and other adults faced with explaining death to a child while struggling with their own feelings about death. It suggests age-appropriate responses to many questions and provides read-along passages for parents who may need help finding words to express their thoughts and feelings about death.