

A RESOURCE  
FROM  
NACG  
MEMBERS



NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR  
CHILDREN'S GRIEF



## Individual Bereavement Support Plan

Part of Griefftalk: A Toolkit for Supporting Students who are  
Grieving

# Individual Student Bereavement Plan



This document is a plan 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.

As designated by district policy in accordance with local and state policies, this is an active document that will only be shared with the people below and other members of the student's academic team. As much as possible the child should 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 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 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

### 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
- Provide tutor/peer assistance
- 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.

### Break Strategies

- Allow student open pass for counselor/social worker/nurse for support
- Allow the student to take a break.

### Behavioral Strategies

- Utilize non-verbal signals or code words for teacher-student communication
- Keep classroom rules simple, visible, and clear

### School/Classroom Events

- Provide choice for participation or an alternative option in special projects or holiday activities that may remind the student 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)



Consider expanding the definition of a family or loved one to acknowledge the diverse range of family compositions and to better represent those significant to the bereaved.

# 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:

(There is not permission to share beyond this list)

It is recommended that this plan is updated with each school transition, additional death, or during the annual IEP/504 process.

Date Updated:

School Enrollment Updated:

School Support Team Members Updated:

# Individual Student Bereavement Plan

## Data Collected

Student name:

School:

Grade:

Academic 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)



**This document is part of NACG Grieffalk : A Toolkit for Supporting Students who are Grieving. Please visit [www.childrengrieve](http://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  
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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 Hoeper, 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

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