



Recognizing and Empathizing with Student Grief and Loss

Course Description: Schools are a place where children spend a large portion of their lives learning, socializing, and making new friends. As they progress through elementary, middle, and high school, their lives develop and change. But as time goes on, it is inevitable that the child will experience some kind of loss. According to Carly Woythaler-Runestad, executive director of the Mourning Hope Grief Center, “One in every twenty children in the United States will experience the loss of a parent or sibling by the age of eighteen. But parental and sibling death is only part of the overall picture. This statistic does not account for how many children will experience the death of grandparents, aunts, uncles, and close friends. When these relationships are considered, it is clear that very few of us will graduate high school without having experienced the death of someone significant in our lives.” This statistic demonstrates the importance of school educators being able to identify a grieving student and having the ability to help them through their grieving process.

This course will provide an understanding of a student’s grieving process, as well as ways to identify the effects of grief on a student. It will clarify an educator’s role in assisting students as they grieve. Topics include the causes of grief, the stages of the grieving process, student presentations of grief, the unique causes of grief for LGBT students and their unique needs, the teacher’s role in the student grieving process, and resources that educators can use to connect students to support groups if needed.

Throughout the course, participants will submit written reflections on what they learned in each individual lesson. At the end of this course, participants will reflect on new learning in this course and develop an implementation plan to utilize in their work.

Clock Hours / Continuing Education Units: 15

Learning Objectives:

- Identify the causes of grief and understand the different stages of the grieving process
- Recognize a student’s presentations of grief
- Compare and contrast the needs of cis-gender and LGBTQ students experiencing grief and loss.
- Evaluate ways to assist students while they grieve
- Reflect on the intersections and implications between new learning and students in your own schools, classrooms, and communities.
- Develop new lessons that can be used in the classroom and professional development setting

Course Requirements: To receive full credit for the course, participants must complete ALL assignments. Failure to complete all assignments will result in a non-passing grade

Getting Started:

- After registering for the course, you will be sent an email with the website address, password and course key you need to access your online course, along with login instructions.
- Access each assignment through the course home page. All assignments will be submitted through the Moodle platform on each respective assignment page.
- Please save a backup copy of all course assignments and completed work.

Course Outline:

Lesson Number	Lesson Description	Clock Hours
1	Introductions and Overview: Take the time to get to know the class layout, read over the Help section, and review any other materials present in the class to get started. Take your time!	0.8 Hours

2	Why is Grief Relevant? – Participants will understand how grief and loss can affect students’ classroom performance and social relationships. In this module, participants will analyze the online resources provided will have a discussion question addressing the value of emotional support and communication. Participants will reflect on their new learning in a discussion post.	1.4 Hours
3	What Causes Grief? In this lesson, participants will use the online resources to identify the causes and types of grief.	1.4 Hours
4	What is the Grieving Process? There are different ways in which we can classify the grieving process. In this lesson, participants will analyze the different ways to classify the grieving process using the online resources, will learn how everyone grieves differently, and will evaluate how these stages of grief could affect a student’s behavior.	1.4 Hours
5	What Does Grief Look Like? In this lesson participants will look at the similarities and differences between the way students grieve at different ages. Participants will review several articles on the different presentations of grief in students with ages ranging from preschool to high school, and will compare and contrast the presentations of grief in these age groups.	1.4 Hours
6	What Does Grief Mean to LGBTQ Youth? It is important to not only acknowledge that there is a difference in how grief affects different ages, but that it affects LGBTQ students in a different way, as well. Participants will focus on how LGBT students can have different sources of grief, and the fact that they may not have a support system in place, and therefore, have a more difficult time managing their own grief. In this module, participants will use the online resources to identify the causes of grief that are specific to LGBTQ students and will evaluate the difficulties associated with grieving as an LGBTQ student in the assessment question that follows.	1.4 Hours
7	How Can Teachers Help? Students spend a significant amount of their days at school, which puts teachers in a great position to be the support that a student may need. In this lesson we will supply some resources that will provide participants with some ideas and strategies that can be used to help grieving students.	1.4 Hours
8	How Can Teachers Provide Support Directly? While you are helping students while they grieve, it may be helpful to connect them with different support groups. In this lesson participants will review resources that can be used to help support a grieving student and will have them create their own collection of these resources so that they can be presented to a student if need be.	1.4 Hours
9	The Importance of Self-Care - Students spend a significant amount of their days at school, which puts teachers in a great position to be the support that a student may need. In this lesson, participants will review some ideas and strategies that can be used to help grieving students.	1.4 Hours
10	Course Reflection: In this lesson, participants will write a summary of their reflections throughout the course, including new learnings	1.00 Hours
11	Implementation Plan: For this final portion of the course, participants will develop a lesson that can be utilized in the classroom, homeroom period, or professional development training that encompasses the new learnings within this course.	2.00 Hours
	TOTAL HOURS	15 Hours

Student Requirements and Assessment: No outside materials will be required for the completion of this course.

Participants will be assessed in four different ways:

- 1. Quizzes:** Participants are required to complete a series of electronic quizzes to assess their understanding. Participants can earn up to 64 points total for the course. Each quiz may be taken up to three times, with the highest score recorded in the final grade. All quizzes must be completed in order to earn credit.
- 2. Lesson Reflections:** Participants are required to complete a reflection at the end of each lesson to analyze the intersections between the content and the experiences of students in their schools, classrooms, and

communities. Participants can earn up to 40 points for all completed lesson reflections. Each reflection will be graded using the following rubric:

Grading Rubric for Discussion Forums		
		Points
Critical Thinking	Makes connections to the other content and real-life that are supported by reference(s) and/or example(s)	1
	Offers new ideas, connections, or applications	1
	Expresses and justifies personal opinion	1
Assignment Specific Criteria	Addresses all questions within the reflection assignment.	2
Total Points Possible		5

3. **Course Reflection:** Participants will be required to write a reflection summarizing their new learnings within the course. Participants can earn up to 10 points total for the reflection. The reflection will be graded using the following rubric:

Grading Rubric for Discussion Forums		
		Points
Critical Thinking	Makes connections to the other content and real-life that are supported by reference(s) and/or example(s)	2
	Offers new ideas, connections, or applications	1
	Expresses and justifies personal opinion	1
Assignment Specific Criteria	Addresses all parts of the reflection	6
Total Points Possible		10

4. **Implementation Plan:** Participants will construct an implementation plan for how their new knowledge can be directly implemented into the classroom, training setting, or professional development environment. Implementation plans will be graded using the following rubric:

Grading Rubric for Implementation Plan		
		Points
Background Information	Lesson / Title Identified	1
	Target Audience and Subject/Course Setting Identified	1
	Learning Goals are measurable objectives students are expected to meet by the end of the lesson.	2
	Lesson Ties to Specific State Standards for Students, Educators, or Professionals	2
	Materials Listed	1
Lesson Plan	<i>Engage:</i> Lesson hooks audience and introduces lesson effectively.	5
	<i>Explore and Explain:</i> Lesson actively engages participants in learning new material using best practices.	5
	<i>Evaluate:</i> Lesson effectively assesses participant understanding.	5
Implementation	Writing is clear, well developed, and organized. No or few grammar and spelling errors	2
	Is realistic in their approach – understands limitations may exist	2
Total Points Possible		26

Grading Scale:

100-80% (140 – 112 Points)	Pass
79%-Below (<112 points)	No Pass

Americans with Disabilities Act: If you are a student with a disability and require any auxiliary aids, services, or other accommodations for this class, please email academy@iowasafeschools.org or call 515.381.0588.

Professional Development: Prior to purchasing a course registration, it is your responsibility to ensure that National Safe Schools Convening Online Academy coursework satisfies the license renewal requirements for your state and/or district.