



## Recognizing and Empathizing with Student Grief and Loss

**Number of Credits:** 1\*

**Course Instructors:** Mark Busch and Dana VanRenterghem

**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.

**Learning Objectives:** Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 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.
- Develop ways to assist students while they grieve

**Resources:** No books are required for purchase in order to complete this course.

Worden, J. (2018). **Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy, Fifth Edition: A Handbook for the Mental Health Practitioner.** ISBN-10: 0826134742

*This textbook outlines the treatment of grief, loss, and bereavement for mental health practitioners. Models of mourning and varied qualities of grief are outlined. This up-to-date edition includes new case studies and initiatives for extending care to the bereaved. It includes detailed knowledge for intervention and preintervention treatment.*

McCoyd, J. and Walter, C. (2015). **Grief and Loss Across the Lifespan, Second Edition: A Biopsychosocial Perspective.** ISBN-10: 9780826120281

*Through a biopsychosocial perspective and developmental framework. Grieving patterns, intervention strategies, and clinical intervention are provided, including a focus on youth. The role of technology and social media in expressions of grief and loss is also highlighted.*

**Course Requirements:** To receive full credit for the course, participants must complete ALL assignments and respond to specific questions outlined in each assignment. Failure to complete all assignments will result in a disqualification in the course and a failing 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 log in 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.

**Participation:**

- You are not required to be present (i.e. online) specific days or times. You will work at your own pace. The course is structured in 3 Weekly Units, however all assignments will not be due until the final day of the course.
- All responses will be posted online. Large documents, files, photographs or PowerPoint presentations may be attached as part of your response by using the “Attachment” option.
- You may work collaboratively and submit similar responses on all assignments except the Implementation Paper, which must be individually authored.

**INTASC Standards that are addressed in this course:**

- 2. The teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support their intellectual, social and personal development.
- 3. The teacher understands how students differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are adapted to diverse learners.
- 4. The teacher understands and uses a variety of instructional strategies to encourage students’ development of critical thinking, problem solving and performance skills.
- 5. The teacher uses an understanding of individual and group motivation and behavior to create a learning environment that encourages positive social interaction, active engagement in learning, and self-motivation.
- 6. The teacher uses knowledge of effective verbal, nonverbal, and media communication techniques to foster active inquiry, collaboration, and supportive interaction in the classroom.
- 7. The teacher plans instruction based upon knowledge of subject matter, students, the community, and curriculum goals.
- 9. The teacher is a reflective practitioner who continually evaluates the effects of his/her choices and actions on others (students, parents, and other professional in the learning community) and who actively seeks out opportunities to grow professionally.
- 10. The teacher fosters relationships with school colleagues, parents, and agencies in the larger community to support students’ learning and well-being.

**Check the Iowa Teaching Standards that are addressed in this course:**

X	1. Enhance Student Achievement		5. Monitoring Student Learning
	2. Content Knowledge	X	6. Classroom Management
X	3. Planning and Preparation	X	7. Professional Growth
X	4. Instructional Strategies		8. Professional Responsibilities

**Assignment List/Timeline:** This assignment list with estimated times for completion is meant to serve as a helpful checklist for you as a learner in completing all the assignments! This is a recommended amount of time to review all articles, webinars, videos, and other materials associated with each assignment. You may take longer or shorter to complete each assignment and times are only estimates based on past learners' experiences.

<b>Topic/Activity</b>	<b>In Class</b>	<b>Out of Class</b>
<b>Getting to Know the Class; Additional Readings:</b> 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!		3 hours
<b><u>Week 1 - Grief 101</u></b>		
<b>Discussion: Introductions</b> – Participants will introduce themselves to their class and discuss what they hope to gain from the course.	1 hour	2 hours
<b>Discussion: Why is Grief Relevant?</b> – Participants will understand how grief and loss can affect students' classroom performance and social relationships. We will also address the importance of emotional support for LGBT students. In this module, participants will analyze the online resources provided will have a discussion question addressing the value of emotional support in cis-gender, heterosexual and LGBTQ students. Participants will reflect on their new learning in a discussion post.	2 hour	2 hours
<b>Discussion: What Causes Grief?</b> – In this module, participants will use the online resources to identify the causes of grief in multiple student populations. They will have a discussion question over these topics.	1 hour	3 hours
<b>Discussion: What is the Grieving Process?</b> – In this module, 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 students behavior. They will demonstrate their understanding in a discussion post.	2 hours	3 hours
<b><u>Week 2 – Student Presentations of Grief</u></b>		
<b>Discussion: What Does Grief Look Like?</b> – In this module we will be looking 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. Participants will share their reflections in a discussion post.	1 hour	3 hours
<b>Discussion: What Does Grief Mean to LGBTQ Youth?</b> – This module will be focusing on how LGBTQ students may have different sources of grief, lack a support system, and 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 evaluate the difficulties associated with grieving as an LGBTQ student in the discussion question that follows.	2 hours	3 hours
<b>Discussion: What Makes Grief Worse?</b> – In this module, participants will learn about ACE scores and their effects on mental health and how this concept can keep an individual from fully acknowledging their emotions. The assessment will include taking an ACE score and evaluating how these experiences could affect one's grieving process.	2 hours	3 hours
<b>Discussion: How Can Teachers Help?</b> – In this module we will supply resources that will provide participants with some ideas and strategies that can be used to help grieving students, and will have them assemble their own set of their favorite guidelines during the discussion at the end of the module.	1 hour	2 hours

<b>Week 3 - What Do You Do?</b>		
<b>Discussion: How Can Teachers Provide Support Directly?</b> – While you are helping students while they grieve, it may be helpful to connect them with different support groups. In this module we will provide participants with 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 hours	2 hours
<b>Discussion: The Importance of Self Care</b> - In this module, participants will use the online resources to evaluate their own self care practices and will discuss how they can be improved in the assessment that follows. Participants will also be provided with mental health resources that can be used by themselves, or their students, and will be asked to save this information for possible use in the future.	2 hours	2 hours
<b>Final: Implementation Plan</b> – Participants will submit a paper on how they will use the information they gained in the course in their educational setting. They will be asked to give specific examples of how they will work to improve the lives of their students or motivate their colleagues to do the same.	1 hours	2 hours
<b>Total Class Time</b>	<b>15 hours</b>	<b>30 hours</b>

**Coursework:** Participants can earn up to 75 points total for the course. The following table depicts the breakdown of points possible for the required coursework

<b>Activity</b>	<b>Points</b>
10 Discussions (5 points each)	50
Final Implementation Plan/Paper	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>

**Grading Scale – Graduate Credit**

100-90% (75-68 points)	A
89-80% (67-60 points)	B
79-70% (59-53 points)	C
69-60% (52-45 points)	D
59%-Below (<45 points)	F

**Grading Scale - License Renewal Credit**

100-80% (75-60 points)	P
79%-Below (<59 points)	NP

**Student Requirements:** Students are required to:

- Participate in all discussion forums
- Complete a final implementation plan

**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 see the instructor to discuss your accommodation needs.

**Statement of Plagiarism:** Academic dishonesty results in failure of this course. Give credit where credit is due. Use the APA Publication Manual to cite references when needed. Not crediting ideas or words of others is unacceptable scholarship as is submitting work that was done for a previous course or that is not your own origin in design or completion. Submit original assignments. Do not submit work for this course that you have done for other courses.

### Grading Rubrics for Individual Activities

**Discussion Forums (50 points possible):** Discussion Forums are asynchronous ways to engage in class discussions. They require you to submit an answer to a question and respond to the posts of other peers. Because they are an integral part of sharing strategies, analyzing research, and sharing ideas, discussion forums in this course comprise a significant percentage of your final grade. It's highly recommended that you read and respond to more than the required two peer postings because greater participation will facilitate a greater depth of understanding. Additionally, it's important to make posts in a timely manner to benefit from peer responses.

<b>Grading Rubric for Discussion Forums</b>		
		<b>Points</b>
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Makes connections to the other content and real-life that are supported by reference(s) and example(s)	1
	Offers new ideas, connections, or applications	1
	Expresses and justifies personal opinion	1
<b>Assignment Specific Criteria</b>	Addresses all parts of the assignment, cites sources	1
<b>Participation (Responses to at least 2 peer posts)</b>	Responds to other posts (when available)	1
<b>Total Points Possible</b>		<b>5</b>

**Implementation Plan (25 points possible) -** The implementation plan is a critical part of this course. Participants must complete a one-page implementation plan. The paper is meant to be a reflection as well as a chance to state what you will use going forward. The rubric below will be used to grade the Implementation Plan, but additional details will be provided within the course.

<b>Grading Rubric for Implementation Plan</b>		
		<b>Points</b>
<b>Critical Thinking</b>	Highlights any new knowledge gained as a result of course.	5
	Offers new ideas, connections, or applications	5
	Expresses and justifies personal opinion	3
	Discusses Overall Implications	2
<b>Assignment Specific Criteria</b>	Addresses all parts of the assignment, cites sources	2
<b>Mechanics</b>	Writing is clear, well developed, and organized, No or few grammar and spelling errors	2
<b>Implementation</b>	Clearly states ideas to use in the future	2
	States resources to be used	2
	Is realistic in their approach – understands limitations may exist	2
<b>Total Points Possible</b>		<b>25</b>