

Dealing with Loss

Month: May

Week #: 35

Day: e. Fri. Time: 30 min.

Take a Chance... Again!

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Objectives/Aims

The students will: learn what it means to reinvest in a new reality.

Materials

white board & markers

Illustration

What did Laura do after the death of her dog, Fido?



Background

After the first step of a loss being accepted is completed, the next step involves what counselors commonly call “grief work.” This grief work is best summarized and explained by the acronym TEAR:

T = To accept the reality of the loss

E = Experience the pain of the loss

A = Adjust to the new environment without the lost object (= attitude adjustment)

R = Reinvest in the new reality

Group Activity

1. Say, “These past few days, we’ve been dealing with TEAR. I hope it hasn’t brought you to tears, unless you are currently dealing with a loss, or that it won’t tear you up in the future. Yes, this weak attempt at humor was to remind you of the meaning of TEAR and to bring in a little language arts as well. You see tear (as in what comes out of your eyes) and tear (as in pulling a piece of paper apart) are homographs, meaning they are spelled the same but are pronounced differently and have different meanings. I’m sorry, I can’t help it, I’m a teacher. :) And yes, one way we deal with grief is through humor. That’s one reason there are comedians and comedies in the movies. It feels good to laugh, especially when we’re crying inside.

2. Say, “Today we’re going to deal with the last letter, ‘R,’ of our acronym TEAR. The ‘R’ means ‘Reinvest in the new reality.’ See if you can figure out what that means by this short story I’m going to tell you:

My (the author; you can always switch the story to 3rd person) grandparents loved dogs. One of the first ones they owned was Patsy, a sheepdog. When I was little, I got in trouble for trying to ride her like a horse. You might say I was in the ‘dog house.’ :) After Patsy died, they had another

Group Activity (continued)

dog. It was a beautiful, long-haired keeshond. Her name was Julie and she lived a long and happy dog life. After she died my grandparents said they didn't want any more dogs. It was just too hard to say goodbye.

Then I happened upon the scene. I was passing through their town on the way to graduate school, and I stopped by to say hi and spend the night. With me was my small mongrel of a dog that was named, 'Lil Bits.' I was going to a school that didn't allow dogs, which presented me with a bit of a predicament. What was I to do with Lil Bits? I knew if I asked my grandparents to keep her, they would say "no." I knew that they loved dogs and really valued their company and enjoyed caring for them. So what could a loving grandson do? The next morning, I left for the school in Chicago... I also left the dog behind, unbeknownst to my grandparents. Once again I was in the 'dog house,' but with time they came to love that little dog and they forgave me.

So what do you think 'Reinvest in a new reality' means? *A: It means to get on with your life. Take new risks, which might lead to more loss, but that is the nature of life. And most people believe, "Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all." (Attributed to the English poet Alfred Tennyson.)* "My grandparents were afraid of reinvesting themselves in a new dog, but they were far happier with one."

3. Once again, choose different loss situations, preferably ones that are different from the previous day. Brainstorm with the students on how they could reinvest themselves in these situations.

Group Discussion Questions (Ask these question periodically as you deal with the different types of loss.)

1. When do you think you should begin reinvesting yourself?

A: Not until you are ready to do so. The right timing varies from person to person.

2. Does reinvesting yourself involve risk?

A: Yes. If you get back on the horse that threw you and caused you to break your leg, it could happen again. In reconnecting with life, the connection might be broken again. That is the nature of life.

Conclusion

Say, "When you are done grieving you need to invest in a new reality. Get on with your life. Get a new puppy, make a new friend, just get on with it! Life is too precious to waste because you're afraid to reinvest yourself. Don't have regrets at the end of your life that you didn't live it to the fullest! There are still miles and miles of smiles to be had out there! :)



What did Laura do after the death of her dog, Fido?