



## Supporting Students in Times of Stress or Struggle

Pt. I Positive Adaptation and Coping  
January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023

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### The Heart of the Work

*"When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'*

*To this day, especially in times of disaster, I remember my mother's words and I am always comforted by realizing that there are still so many helpers –so many caring people in this world."*

~Mr. Rogers



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## Learning Objectives

- ✓ Define coping and adaptation
- ✓ Increase the ability to recognize signs of positive adaptation and coping
- ✓ Deepen understanding of challenges that can impede adaptation
- ✓ Create initial insight into the role of professionals in supporting students through these challenges



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## Remember...



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## What we already know...

- *Experiencing stress is a part of being human*
- *Stressed brains aren't learning brains*
- *Stressed brains aren't flexible*
- *Stressed hearts aren't open*

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## Coping

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The ongoing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes required to manage the specific environment and situation.

The two main functions of coping are:

- Regulation of emotional responses
- Solving problems



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## Positive Adaptation

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- Ability to maintain emotional distress within manageable limits; master symptoms related to the stress response
- Has a developmentally appropriate understanding of the challenge
- Ability to take advantage of help or support
- Integration of the experience into domains of life – family, school, friends
- Achieve age/development-appropriate expectations in family, peer, school, etc. responsibilities
- Give experience meaning in one's life, one's family system
- Learn how to live with the uncertainty of the future; maintain hopefulness and realistic expectations



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## Signs of Positive Adjustment

- Express and cope with emotions
- Develop aspects of positive self-esteem
- Seek help and support when needed
- Knowledgeable about the experience, ask questions when unsure
- Ability to use one or more coping strategies
- Personal identity is not only defined by the experience



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## Challenges to Healthy Adjustment


Increasing our ability to Recognize & Respond

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Today's Focus

Grief & Loss


Toxic Stress & Trauma



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Fire Drill!



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## Benefits to Responding



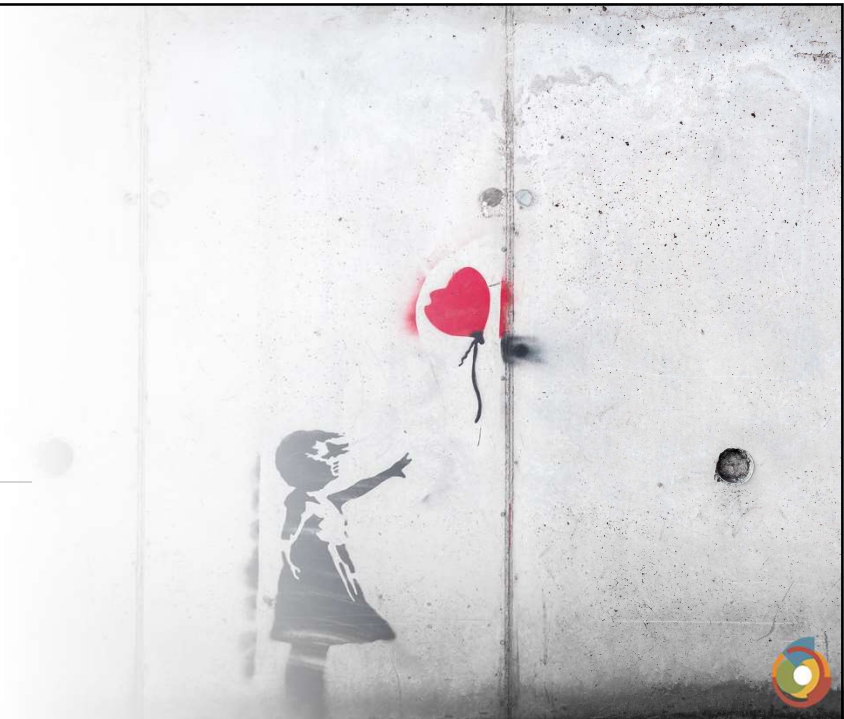
- Proactive
- Mediates risk
- Opportunity for life-long learning



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## Activity

What is Loss?



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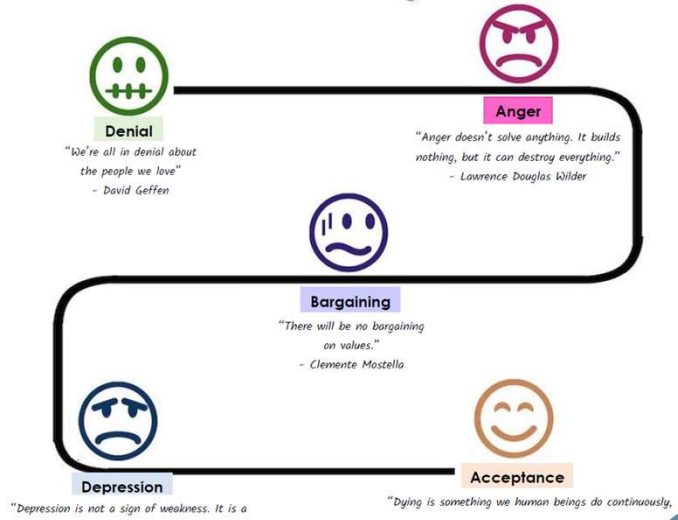


# A Grief Reaction

## 5 Stages of Grief

Kübler-Ross Theory

by eClosure



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## Tasks

Accept the  
reality of the  
loss

Experience  
emotional  
aspects

Adjust to the  
environment

Relocate the  
loss within  
one's life

Find ways to  
memorialize

J. William Worden



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## Factors Influencing Grief Response

Nature of the loss  
Unfinished business

Relationship

Grief

Loss History  
Age | Developmental Stage

Social support  
Faith | Culture



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## Discussion

- What stood out to you?
- What did you observe related to:
  - Tasks of grief
  - Factors influencing grief

A photograph of three people smiling. A man in a light blue shirt is on the left, a woman in a pink shirt is in the center holding a stack of colorful folders, and an older woman in a light blue shirt and glasses is on the right holding an open book.

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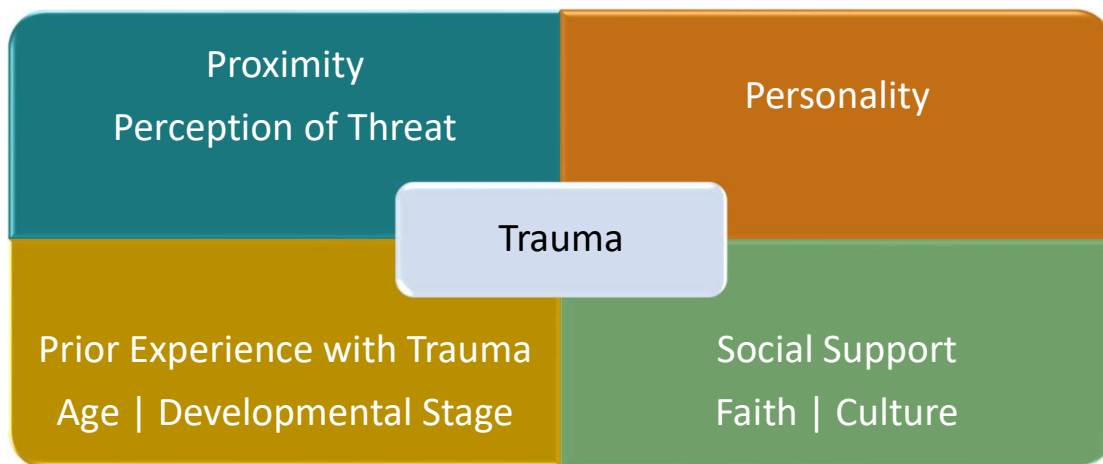
## Grief Over Time

Milestones, Development,  
New Questions...



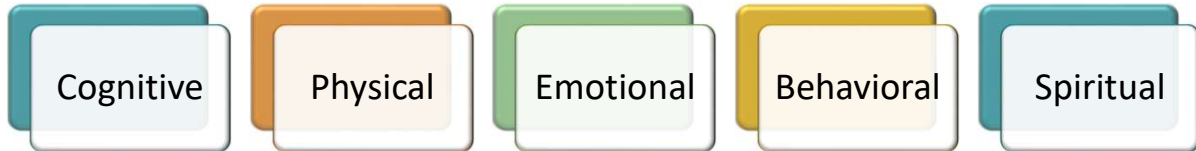
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## Factors Influencing Trauma



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## Domains of Reaction



Critical Incident Stress Management



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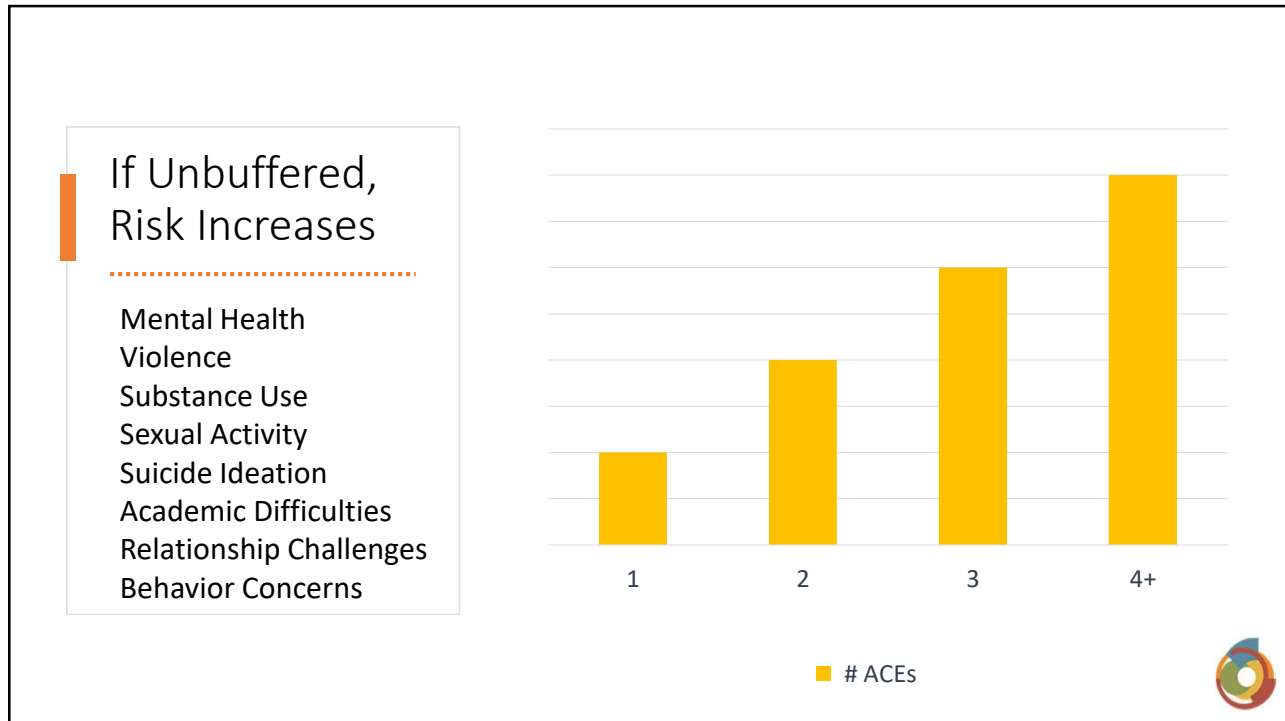
## Immediate Referral to Higher Level of Care

1. Suicide ideation with plan and intent
2. Homicide ideation with plan and intent
3. Indications of auditory or visual hallucinations
4. Indications of acute physical health crisis



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### A Stressed Student Needs:

- To understand their experience
- To have help with overwhelming reactions
- To have their concerns validated
- To feel safe and supported
- To receive accurate information
- Careful listening
- Structure and routine

### Students Experiencing Grief and Loss *Also* Need:

- To have their loss acknowledged
- To memorialize and remember



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## Educators and Advocates can Provide



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## Bright Futures

Knowledgeable, supportive and constructive responses from educators are vital to the success of students who experience significant life stress, loss, or trauma.

**YOU** make a **DIFFERENCE!!**



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## Discussion

- What is one thing you will take with you from today's discussion?
- What is one action you can take?



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