

# Khululeka

## Grief Support for Children and Youth

### Information on Grief for Teachers

Sometimes when we are confronted with grieving children we feel overwhelmed and helpless. Most of us want to help and want to reduce the pain that the child is feeling or we are scared to get too close to the child and remind the child of the pain and it starts crying.

So we end up saying things like: you must forget, you must be strong, you must not let this thing make you unhappy.

But this exactly can lead children to feel that their pain has no value.

The child experiences the pain as a way of connecting with the person who has died. Many children are actually afraid that they will forget the person, because then they are really not there any more.

#### **To help children live well with grief there are a few things you can do as a teacher:**

- ❖ When a child comes back from a funeral of someone close do not ignore that something very important has happened. Say something to the class as well so the other children know. You can also invite other children who have lost someone to take the initiative in speaking to the child. It helps the child to know that there are others that feel the same pain.
- ❖ Talk about grief and death openly in the class room.
- ❖ Do not pretend to ignore children when they have experienced a loss.
- ❖ Use some of the games and tools on the web page to foster a safe environment in your classroom.
- ❖ Consider some of the physical exercises that will relieve tension.
- ❖ If there are many children at the school who have experienced loss you can also start a grief support group. Please get in touch with us to connect you to the nearest facilitator or to attend one of our training courses.
- ❖ Get together with colleagues and talk openly about coping with grief.
- ❖ Read up on grief!
- ❖ Order the book "Someone I Love Died" from Khululeka for you and your school.  
From: [Khululeka@ipages.co.za](mailto:Khululeka@ipages.co.za)  
Telephone No: (021) 633-5287  
Fax No: (021) 637-3487

