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A Child's Experience Working Through Grief: A Booklet For School Aged Children Navigating Their Grief Journeys

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ALYSSA JOHNSON (Nursing)

A Child's Experience Working Through Grief: A Booklet For School Aged Children Navigating Their Grief Journeys

Sponsor: Sara Murphy (Honors Program)

The term grief describes the feelings you experience in response to the death of a person in your life, while the term mourning represents the period in which you feel or express signs of grief or sorrow. A child's grief experience after the death of a significant person in their life is an often overlooked and understudied topic. The importance of being open and honest with children as they navigate their grief journey is at the forefront of this project. Using research regarding how children process, express, and understand grief, I created, "A Person In My Life Has Died, What Happens Now? A Booklet for School-Aged Children Navigating Their Grief Journey." This booklet aims to provide school-aged children with information and interactive activities as they navigate their complicated journey of grief. After creation of the booklet, it was distributed to children ages seven to ten at FRIENDS WAY, a grief support group located in Warwick, Rhode Island. Upon delivery of the booklets to coordinators at FRIENDS WAY, I received incredible feedback regarding the activities included in the booklet. FRIENDS WAY staff assessed the booklet as age appropriate and promoting a positive and healthy method of working through grief. Caregivers especially appreciated the booklet's core message that grief never truly ends, is a lifelong journey, and is different for everyone. This positive feedback and clear understanding of the central principle of the booklet clearly identified its significant value to the children as they navigate their lifelong journey with grief.