Preparing for Grief Camps

May 2 – Bereavement Professional Chat Box Transcript

Rachelle Stephens: Are there any recommendations for using college student assistance, partnering with colleges with support during grief camp for children? Trying to utilize social club involvement for community service points.

Rachelle Stephens: Thank you!

Diane Snyder Cowan: We have also used teachers (active and retired) and we have used campers that have aged out.

Rachelle Stephens: Great idea.

Diane Snyder Cowan: Please speak on volunteers getting too friendly with campers and issues with social media?

Rachelle Stephens: Such an awesome tool for support to community children... has any of the small groups been split and specifically geared toward children as exposed to suicide or traumatic death?

Amy Fisher: Can you share those volunteer guidelines?

Rachelle Stephens: Very true... thank you.

Diane Snyder Cowan: We try to make sure there are kids with other kids who have similar losses in the same group. We do groups of 6-8 kids by ages. So - loss of parent, or sibling, grandparent, etc.

Rachelle Stephens: Excellent!

Deborah Pausig: What age ranges do you break the small groups into?

Diane Snyder Cowan: Depends on the ages of the kids that register and how many we have...we try for an 18 month spread and take kids ages 6-13 for our day camp.

Julie Lockwood: Do you have different trainings for different types of volunteers? (i.e. - we do a buddy/grief counselor training) and day volunteers separately. (We are a camp Erin)

Deborah Pausig: Thank you.

Christina Voissem: Our camp is age 7-17. We break out into 3 small groups (elementary, middle school & HS).

Melissa Tinklepaugh: Do you discuss the specific losses of the children coming?

Julie Lockwood: Thanks for the input!

Diane Snyder Cowan: Melissa - do you mean during the training for the volunteers?

Mary Ann Burns: Invite parents on the last afternoon for a balloon release with the children to end camp.

Rachelle Stephens: Any tips for attendees for kids with special needs?

Melissa Tinklepaugh: How was the response for the family camp?

Christina Browning: Our organization had a full day family day camp which was very well attended with periods of time for family activities, children's small group by age break out times, and adult self-care and support group break out times. It was held from 9-5 on a Saturday.

Rachelle Stephens: Thank you.

Pauline Engolio: If there are children that are hearing impaired or deaf, please have them sit where they choose. Most do read lips and understand what the teachers/counselors are saying especially when they over exaggerate their words.

Melissa Tinklepaugh: Yes.