

**AN INVESTIGATION ON BEREAVEMENT
INTERVENTION STRATEGIES AND INCLUSION OF
DEATH EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM FOR THE
LEARNERS IN THE SOUTH EAST REGION SCHOOLS
OF BOTSWANA.**

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**THIS MINI DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION (GUIDANCE AND
COUNSELLING). IN THE NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY
(MAFIKENG CAMPUS).**

SCHOOL: SCHOOL OF POST GRADUATE STUDIES

FACULTY: EDUCATION

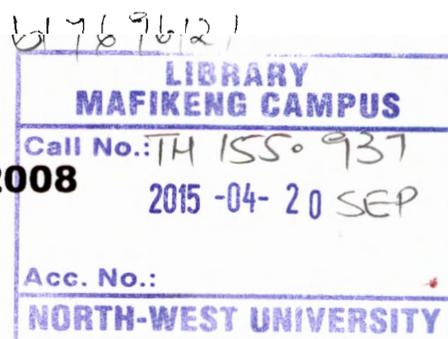


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June 2007



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ABSTRACT

In this investigation senior secondary students (N=310); class teachers (N=11); Guidance teachers (N=5); teachers who are Heads of Departments (N=10); principals (n=5 and parents who are members of Parents Teachers' Association (PTA) (N=20) each responded to the participation of students in the death event of a family member or a close relative and testified to their process of mourning. These respondents gave testimony on how the schools in the south – east region of Botswana give support to each learner who has lost a loved one is it a parent, a sibling or relative. However, this support is reported as being insufficient and inappropriate to the extent of it being insignificant in rendering such bereaved learners to reconnecting with their schooling life and their school work. This short coming is accounted for by lack of or very little of material and engaging with death education.

In establishing the extent and depth of the section of the curriculum that deals with death education in the schools of targeted area in this study, data triangulation was used - students gave their version of bereavement section in the curriculum; class-teachers and guidance teachers gave their versions and so did the parents who are members of the Parents Teachers Association. These three groups (students, teachers and parents) have confirmed that the school curriculum does not have sufficient material on death/bereavement education. This investigation has also looked at the post-funeral care for these young students at school. The *a priori theory* for this care is articulated by Mallon (1998) when he maintains that we should accept that the emotional healing that the mourning process involves is crucial to the child's well-being as it is to adults.

The grieving is much better carried out immediately after the event rather than being post poned. In reconnecting with the academic work that has been going on during the bereaved students absence (while participating in pre–funeral arrangements and the funeral itself) sufficient time needs to be allocated for this

“lost time” in an appropriate manner. This study has also established that this is not being attended to sufficiently and appropriately hence the absence of a coherent bereavement policy. The recommendations of this study therefore are an inclusion of bereavement and death education in the curriculum of the Senior Secondary Schools in Botswana, counseling and extra lessons for bereaved learners and a detailed bereavement policy to be considered by the Botswana Ministry of Education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT: I would like to thank the following sincerely:

Let me first of all congratulate Mr Ndandani (my supervisor at the University of North West) for his marvelous research skills, research knowledge and research expertise. He sailed with me through thick and thin. He had bailed me out of the thorny unbearable difficult research journey. I admire his workaholic academic spirit.

I thank Dr Loate for the courage and inspiration she gave me to see the sky as the limit

My thanks go to Mr Keboetswe (Lecturer at Molepolole College of Education) for having proof read and edited my work. I thank all the educators in schools who assisting me to accomplish my study through availing themselves and their learners in providing me with relevant research information.

My appreciation also goes to Diratsame Junior School (form 3B and 3C students 2007) for the valuable help they offered me when I was analysing my research results.

Finally my sincere gratitude is extended to my noble ministry of education (Secondary Department) for allowing me to accomplish my research in spite my busy congested teaching schedule.

DEDICATION: This work is dedicated to my mother Senwelo Sephetsolo, my son Tano and my siblings.

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1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Botswana is among those countries that have been hard hit by the scourge of HIV/AIDS in the south of the Sahara. Apart from AIDS and other natural calamities, there are other losses as a result of road accidents, crime and domestic violence. All these catastrophes leave behind orphans because of the death of their parents and other relatives.

Children may also as a result of the death of the relative have to relocate or go to a new school. This distabilises the children's psychological stability (Mallon 1998). Because such children would not have peace of mind as the incident of death is internalised in their mind and they fear reoccurrence of the incident.

Following the death of a family, close friend or classmate, bereaved students may show grief reactions that are easy to ignore or confuse with other causes. Academic work may suffer due to difficulty in concentrating in class, attendance problems, day dreaming and missed homework assignments, the result drop in marks and failed class tests can result in added tensions at home, where they may already be other problems.

Teachers have always had to deal with pupils experiencing bereavement and loss. Recent death statistics emanating mostly from HIV/AIDS and road accidents have negative impacts on the children who are normally left alone to look after themselves. This scenario is highlighting the need for inclusion of death education in the curriculum to be considered in schools. This requires that curriculum designers spear headed by the educators and necessitated by the bereaved pupils to include death, grief, mourning and bereavement in the school curriculum (Holland in Reid, 2001).

Government education authorities agree that the school curriculum should include aspects of death, mourning and bereavement in different syllabi programmes (Thapelo,

Morima and Wills, 2000). Valuable work by Brown (1997), Leaman, Sharp and Cowie in Reid (2001) calls for education about death throughout the curriculum.

Education about death is part of the preparation for stressful event involving grief and loss. However, spiritual provision for the bereaved child moves beyond the remit of the documented curriculum (Brown, 1997).

The school must consider with particular care how a child will receive support when returning to school after bereavement. Inadequate response from a school towards a learner's bereavement problems may create long - term difficulties in the grieving process (Leaman, Sharp and Cowie in Reid 2001).

Children who have suffered emotional pain carry baggage and preoccupation that prevent them from getting on with learning Greenhalgh (1997:31).

The role of a school extends beyond the responsibility of addressing educational policies, and that whilst curriculum content is important, equally the role of the school in relation to the children's bereavement must be a primary concern. Emotional research has repeatedly shown that emotional stability to be a prerequisite for learning:

Even if I stay in your lesson, I will learn nothing because my mind is constantly occupied with problems that I can not deal with (Maslow,1954:20).

These are the remarks quoted by Maslow (in Reid, 2001) from a pupil who survived the High school mini bus crash in 1997 in California, United States of America. If educators and managers can not accept responsibility for emotional issues, then subsequent learning can not take place and recovery is delayed (Reid, 2001).

Quite often a school-age child who has experienced the death of a significant person exhibits behaviours similar to Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) behaviours. These behaviour may include:

- Trouble completing assignments
- Inability to concentrate
- Decreased reading comprehension
- Difficulty following directions
- Inability to form or maintain friendship

These behaviours show the negative effects of death on the social and academic well being of learners. Many studies have shown the significance of the inclusion of bereavement and intervention strategies in the school curriculum, (Balk,,Fowler and Hogan in (Mallon 1998)).A gap has been realised that many teachers put more emphases on the academic attainment irrespective of the child emotional circumstances. Mellon (1998) had advised that grieving is much better carried out immediately after the event rather than being postponed The child can always undertake the educational tasks later when he/she can concentrate, because he/she may never gain full psychological well being if he/she can not grief successfully at he/her own pace or if he/she can not mourn directly at the time he needs to mourn (Mallon 1998). The proper completion of grieving process will depend on the institutional bereavement intervention strategy in place Mallon (1998).

It has become apparent that death education is not part of the training of teachers. This suggests that one of the reasons why bereaved children are not fully assisted when death befalls their relative is that death education is not effectively offered in schools and that teachers do not have the necessary knowledge and understanding of both why they should be teaching about death and how they can do this naturally through the curriculum. It is worth noting that unless the child is intensively assisted to cope and sail through grief process after the death of the significant one, the loss can lead to the student dropping out of school.

Furthermore, this stressful life has implications for the overall physical and emotional well being of the pupils, for example their judgment on daily decision making and their academic achievement (Mallon 1998). This impact plays a significant part in the student subsequent school career. At its simplest level anxiety reduces attention span, it increases distractibility, lowers efficiency and cause fear of failure in academic performance.

It is very likely that during a child's school life the death of grandparents and other close relative will occur (Doyle, 1989). Children spend a large proportion of their formative years at school. When experience of bereavement affect their lives, the school becomes a key element within their world (Doyle 1989).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The observation that has been made in several schools is that quite often many students are usually neglected after having lost their parents or significant relatives, with no one caring for them. The bereaved children with this inadequate help remain vulnerable to poor academic attainment due to difficulty in concentrating, attendance problems, and missed homework assignments (Mallon 1998).

Many schools seem not to have bereavement programmes in place or significant bereavement intervention strategies in the school curriculum. The challenges that are dealt with in this study, among others are the perceptions of respondents/participants regarding the inclusion of death topic in the curriculum plus praxis thereof. The study will assesses the current schools bereavement strategies within its investigative route against respondents' perceptions and praxis referred to above.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following are the research questions that guided this study:

- 1.2.1 What roles are played by the following key figures in the student's bereavement strategies: Class teacher, School counselor, Pastoral care teacher, School Head and the Parent?
- 1.2.2 What are the perception of educators and learners regarding the inclusion of death topic in the curriculum?
- 1.2.3 To what extent has the topic of death and bereavement been included in the school curriculum of the sampled schools?
- 1.2.4 To what extent have the Educators been work shopped or trained to handle the 'death' topic in the classroom?
- 1.2.5 Are the current bereavement intervention strategies in school sufficient in their content and operations?
- 1.2.6 How do the following activities or aspects help the bereaved to come to terms with the loss of significant one: *public funerals, memorial services, rites, rituals, traditional and private rituals*

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to investigate the bereavement intervention strategies and inclusion of *death education* in the curriculum for Senior Secondary School learners of South East Schools of Botswana. The study aims to examine the following:

- 1.3.1 To determine whether Senior Secondary Schools in the South East of Botswana

have the topic of death in the education section in their curricula (Yes/No).
answer).

1.3.2 To investigate the scope of bereavement topic covered by the school curriculum and the intervention strategies in place in the sampled schools.

1.3.3 To determine to what extent have the teachers been trained or workshopped to handle the issue of bereavement experienced by learners at Senior Secondary Schools in the region.

1.3.4 To determine the role played by school key figures in learners' welfare in addressing the issues of learners' bereavement, these being:

- Students
- Class Teachers
- School Counsellor
- Heads of Department
- School Heads/ Deputy Heads
- Parents(Parents only from the Parents Teachers Association Executive Committee)

1.3.4.1 To assess the current bereavement strategies of the sampled schools in line with the participants' perception and their notion of praxis

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study pioneers the inclusion of death and bereavement education in the families of learners as components of school curriculum.

The study calls for a focus on empowering bereaved learners to cope with death in the school and their respective families.

The study intends to award schools with the responsibility of being havens for emotionally hurt learners.

The study intends to assist in contributing new knowledge to the existing body of knowledge in the area of child bereavement.

1.5 DELIMITATION

This study was done in the senior secondary schools in the south east of Botswana. The study is confined to contents of bereavement section of school curriculum and the bereavement intervention strategies in place for Senior Secondary School learners. For this reason the outcome of the study can and should only be generalized to the concerned population.

1.6 LIMITATIONS

The limitations of the study are listed as follows:

The size of the sampled schools in this study present constraint in generalising the findings to the whole country.

- Total number of public Secondary Schools in Botswana = **24**

- Total number of Secondary Schools in South Region = **7**

- Sampled schools = **5**

- Percentage of sampled schools against Secondary Schools in South Region $\frac{5}{7} \times 100/1$ = **71%**

- Percentage of sampled schools against Secondary Schools in Botswana $\frac{5}{24} \times 100/1$ = **21%**

The learners' questionnaire will be written in English. At times, the language presents itself as a barrier. English is rarely spoken in these schools and it is only used to facilitate lessons. English is often spoken as a second or third language, thus learners predominantly communicate in Setswana. Some students may likely to have problems in comprehending some of the questions written in English, Hence at times the researcher will have to spend time with these learners to help those who would experience difficulty in comprehending some of the questions in their questionnaire. This would be done by simplifying, elaborating and explaining some of the difficult questions.

It should be appreciated that they might be some instances where some parents might not be reached for the purpose of completing the questionnaires. This is due to the fact that most of the parents stay in the villages that are far from the schools their children attend, more so that some of these children are boarders (those students who stay at the schools where they attend).

Some of the educators may not be willing to respond to the questionnaires due to lack of time and interest hence this may impact the return rate of responses negatively. This may also have a bearing on the type of response solicited from the respondents.

1.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Each occurrence of the death of a human being evokes strong emotions from those who witness it, more so those who the deceased has a family member or a relative.

Psycho- biological studies have engaged with the fact that when human beings are overwhelmed with emotions, their reasoning gets clouded and may lack rationale, hence, Frolov, and Yudin, (1986:10) maintain that:

“Issue concerned with ethics of science and social responsibility of the scientist, which until recently lay in the periphery of the philosophy, methodology, sociology, and history of science, are now the objects of increasing attention. This is especially true of the ethics of biological and medical research”

Further still, Creswell, (1998) says that the language of qualitative studies becomes personal, literary, and based on definitions that evolve during a study, rather than being defined by the researcher at the beginning of a study. Taking into consideration the above observations, this study will. In its data – collecting activity, be aware to the issues raised here. The bereaved to be sampled in this study will have their responses analysed in this context, more so because the core respondents in this study are young persons, the learners/students. Teachers, who are also within the centre of this study, have reached a level of maturity in dealing with their individual situations related to the issue raised by bereavement education within a school context

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

DEATH

Death is used to mean the end of something, and in this study will mean the end of one’s life. Death can be either natural or unnatural. Natural death is the one that simply happens in the course of nature. Unnatural death is one that occurs as a freak accident (what some people call an act of God), or as the result of human action or inaction (Israel, Mangope, Masheka and Paya 2001). In this study death means loss of life or end of one’s existence on earth.

Death Education (Staudacher, 1987:21). This term will be used interchangeable with “Death topic” in this study. More references could also be made to Holland (in Reid, 2000:1) where he talks about the inclusion of *death education* in the curriculum. Also (Morima and Will, 2000:1-2; Brown, 1997; Leaman; Sharp and Cowie in Reid 2001:2).

GRIEF

The word grief is derived from the Latin word “gravis” which means heavy. Roach and Nieto (1997). Rando (1984) defined grief as a process of psychological, social and somatic reactions to the perception of loss. Grief is a natural reaction to loss. People need to go through grief to heal and ultimately experience emotional growth. In the context of this study grief refers to how the bereaved student responds to the loss of a significant one. Death is the most obvious life loss. The death of a loved one may cause the most intense grief. Other losses may be equally painful to cause the pain of grief :

Divorce or separation (the loss of a relationship).

Disability due to accident or other causes.

The loss of a job / business.

The loss of a pet (a cat or a dog).

Grief is a highly personal response to life losses. Every relationship we have with a person is unique and irreplaceable. Since relationships are unique so is grief.

LOSS

According to Rando (1984), loss is a natural part of our existence and can be categorized into two types: Physical or tangible and symbolic or psychosocial loss. The loss of a loved one is an example of a physical loss. Example of symbolic loss includes getting a divorce or losing status because of a job demotion. The grief associated with the loss of a loved one is the main focus of this research. A loss in this study refers to the death of a significant person.

BEREAVEMENT

The term bereavement refers to a separation or loss through death. Bereavement reactions consist of the physiological, psychological or behavioural responses to loss. Responses are individual and vary in intensity, duration and frequency. The occurrences of these reactions comprise the bereavement process, which can persist from weeks to years (Sally and Beatriz 1997). This is the conceptualisation of bereavement and reactions one experiences upon losing a significant one.

MOURNING

Averill (in Mallon, 1998) defined mourning as the “conventional behaviour established by traditions, customs and mores of a given society.” Mourning is the expression of culturally prescribed behaviour and may or may not coincide with the individual’s thought and feelings. Mourning will refer to the sad behaviour that is interpreted.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 HOW DOES DEATH AFFECT CHILDREN

Much as there have been some debate as to whether children grieve or not, there is now a movement towards the belief that indeed children do so (Rando,1984) says that all the available evidence suggests that not to assist the bereaved child in actively confronting death is to predispose him/her to significant pathology and life - long problems. Thus, Smith and Pennells 1995:2 maintain that:

...It is important for children who experience a loss or traumatic event to have the opportunity to express their grief and work through unresolved feelings and issues in order to prevent the possibility of later psychopathology.

Professional literature, clinical experience and research with bereaved children all indicate that there are some marked differences, as well as similarities between grief of children and adults Webb (2000, citing Smith and Pennells, 1995 and Worden, 1991).

Children's limited ability to verbalize their feelings as well as very limited capacity to tolerate the pain generated by open recognition of their loss is one of the differences in children's handling of grief to that of adults. Children fear to be 'different' from their peers with regard to having a deceased parent. Children feel unsettled to be viewed with a sympathetic perception. They do not want to be associated with death 'why them out of so many children to lose a relative'. While adults may obtain comfort from the condolences of their friends, children dread this process, and in most cases their peers feel equally uncomfortable at the prospect of having to speak to a bereaved friend. Some of the children consider crying babyish, so they do their crying in private.

Many adults feel uncomfortable talking with children about death. They want to 'protect' children from exposure to death and therefore refrain from discussion about death with children. Another contributing factor in adult's reluctance to talk with children about

death can be the mutuality of the loss experience. Naturally when children are bereaved, adults in the same family also too grieve the same loss. This means that the adults are less available to comfort the child since they are immersed in their own grieving process. Furthermore, the child may display his/her feelings openly, which may suggest to the family members that they are doing fine. This may give the parents an impression that the child has accepted the death therefore he/she is fine.

This means that in most instances, the bereaved child has neither family nor friends to console him/her. Even when someone might be available and able to reach out, comforting a bereaved child it is not easy because the child is so confused and uncomfortable about his or her feelings. The bereaved child may be unable to tolerate the pain of talking about the deceased.

There is a need for intervention when children are bereaved. It might be challenging to help children during bereavement because of other issues that they have at different developmental stages. The helper must come up with intervention strategies suitable for the child and move at their paces.

2.2. BEREAVEMENT AT DIFFERENT STAGES

Using Raphael's description of childhood responses to bereavement as quoted by Rando (1984) gives a framework for understanding the bereavement of children.

Infants from about a few months old to two and a half years react in different ways to the death of their own mother. In the first few months, children react by crying and showing signs of distress. These signs are so unique and are not easily recognised except through the eyes of a caring mother. The caring mother will often comfort the child from cry and pain. Good surrogate mothering often soothes this reaction.

From about six months to two and a half years, there are signs of beginnings of grief and mourning. Their initial reaction is shock, followed by protest at their separation with the

mother. Prolonged absence teaches the child that its protest is to no avail and despair arises. Recollection, yearning, longing, and pain ensue. When eventually the child gives up looking for its mother, no longer expecting or hoping for her return, despair and sadness becomes evident and there is lack of interest on usually pleasurable objects and activities. The child will then become detached from everyone if a constant and caring person does not take over. At this stage (6 months-2 years), the child does not understand the finality of death, but only recognize separation, there was a 10 year study of children at 18 to 24 months who experienced maternal separation, done by Robertson (as quoted by Bowlby, 1960). He describes a two year old reaction to the absence of its mother:

...it is indeed as if the child's world has been shattered. His intense need of her is unsatisfied, and the frustration and longing may send him frantic with grief. He is overwhelmed as any adult who has lost a beloved person by death... He does not know death, but only absence; and if the only person who can satisfy his imperative need is absent, she might as well be dead (Bowlby, 1993:9) referenced by Webb (2002).

From the ages of two to five years, children are still unable to grasp the permanence of a separation. A child will cry, cling or show anger at the separation through tantrums or destructive behaviour. Experiencing the death of a significant person at this stage may undermine the child's security and sense of reliability of the world (Rando, 1984). Unfortunately at this age, some family members do not acknowledge the child's painful mourning. This inhibits the child's expression of his/her feelings. The child lacks the security and resources to address the grief in the absence of support from others. At this age of 2-5 years, which includes children in their first year at school, it is important that children are constantly reassured of love and caring and repeated explanations of what happened to help them make sense of the situation.

At ages of five to eight, there is more of cognitive understanding of death and its implications, although not to the adult level. Much as these children understand death, they have little coping capacity. Their prime defence of loss is denial. These children may cry and express their feelings, but only do it in private for fear of being 'babyish'. Even

adults in their lives may not be aware of this. This may be misinterpreted by these children as uncaring, unloving or unaffected, and may not receive the support and comfort they desperately need. To cope they may develop a strong fantasy life in an attempt to keep the relationship with the deceased person (Smith & Pennells, 1995). Other responses at this age may be guilt due to the hostile wishes which may have caused the death; concern about being different from peers since parent is dead; and fears about the vulnerability of the surviving parent.

At ages of eight to twelve, the child may experience yearning and longings for the deceased, but these are 'childish' feelings and must be controlled (by talking to the child about reality and irreversibility of death). This may lead to being unable to share them with anyone, and consequently put on a façade of independence and coping (Rando, 1984). The child at this age is still unable to accept the finality of the personal loss, although the finality and irreversibility of death in general is recognized. This, coupled with the fact that the yearning is often repressed, puts the child at risk of failing to resolve denial and being secure again, or when the relationship is established with a surrogate who can make the child feel secure enough to express his/her yearning and sadness over death.

During adolescence, the grief reaction begins to approximate that of adulthood. Adolescents grieving, however, may be further compounded by their characteristically rapid physical and emotional development (Smith and Pennells, 1995). Adolescent easily express anger at the loss and this gives them power to seek and get necessary help. This anger may fuel depression or be used to inappropriately punish self or others for the death. Denial may also be used as a defence, for the adolescents really fear losing control of their already strong emotions and are especially threatened by the ideal of morality (the question of whether it is morally and socially accepted to express one's feelings in public. At this stage many adult responses will be seen, but will be complicated by typical adolescent problems, such as:

...resistance to communicating with adults, over-concern about the

acceptability of their responses; alienation from adults and sometimes peers; lack of knowledge of social expectations....

Rando (1984:162).

These ongoing tasks of adolescence will preclude mourning from being successfully completed. It may be delayed, possibly until secure relationships are established to facilitate it, or occur immediately.

Given that children react differently to bereavement at different stages of development, it requires that whatever intervention strategies are employed to help them, should take this into consideration.

2.3. FACTORS INFLUENCING CHILDRENS' GRIEF

The process and outcome of bereavement is influenced by a number of factors. Some of such factors are:

Type of death

How a person dies can influence how the child grieves. Sudden death, regardless of whether it was due to natural causes, suicide or homicide (NASH) is difficult to grieve than death in which there was some prior warning that death is eminent.

Suicide loss

Loss due to suicide poses difficulties in grief resolutions for the survivors. In most cultures, suicide is perceived as sinful, criminal, a weakness or madness (Rando, 1984). The social stigma due to society's attitudes towards suicide frequently results in lack of social and emotional support for the survivors. Survivors are also forced to deal with the shame for the actions of the deceased, a shame they have difficulties differentiating themselves from (whether they are the cause of the suicide or not). These unpleasant experiences heighten the already existing anger at the deceased (Kubler-Ross, 1969). Survivors also suffer intense emotions of guilt, because there is often a tendency to blame themselves for failure to prevent suicide (Rando 1984).

Homicide

Homicide is also sudden, unexpected and traumatic to the survivors. There are intense issues of anger towards the perpetrators. The issue of safety also arises, especially if the perpetrator(s) has not been caught. The survivor or bereaved will always have fear that the perpetrator would come back and kill him or her for the very same reason best known to the killer. So the child needs to be assisted through any school program in place, to remove the fear the child has (Rando 1984).

The relationship to the deceased

The nature of the relationship of the child and deceased impacts the grief. That is, it makes a difference if the deceased was a parent, grandparent, sibling or friend to the bereaved.

How the child is related to the deceased also determines the extent of grief. How close or distant the child was to the deceased affects how the child responds to the death. Not only the recent nature of the relationship but also the historical nature of the relationship matters. Death can cause resurfacing of abandonment or other such negative feelings.

Personality and developmental level

The child's sex and age will determine how well he/she handles anxiety and how he/she handles stressful situation. Both aspects of sex and age will affect the child's response to death. If there were previous losses and how they were grieved will affect the handling of the current loss. The child's developmental level and cognitive capacity influence his or her perception of the event(s) (Furman and Wilder (as cited in Brown 1997).

Cultural Aspects

Culture is a system of shared symbols, serving as guides for our interactions with others. Cultural practices provide safety and security, integrity and belonging, Kagawa-Singer (1998). One's cultural background can help him/her to interpret current circumstances.

The social, ethnic and religious backgrounds of the grieving child also have some influence. Whether or not the child has emotional or social supports from significant others during the loss is important. Other changes that occur in the family due to the loss can affect the bereaved child. If the child loses his/her main supporter, emotionally and financially, it would very much complicate his/her grief.

Cultural and ethnic identity will too affect how the child experiences the loss. It is essential to understand methods of coping with loss and expressing feelings, which are acceptable within his particular community and family, for instance is loud crying appropriate in his/her community or ethnic group. So any program, which may be used to assist the child cope emotionally, should always take into consideration the child's socio-cultural practices for example, are children allowed to attend funeral service? Are children taught about death and related issues at school? And how does the bereaved interpret death from various religious or cultural points of view? The burial, cremation or entombment activities are part of cultural ritual practises that play an important role in the bereaved healing process.

Opportunities provided for the child

Opportunities provided for the child to process the grief, including the clarity of information given and the degree of experiential participation in rituals both formal and informal are important in helping the child to accomplish the grieving process. Rituals, which are the usual cultural or religious practices like seeing the corps before the burial, or throwing handful of sand particles as a way of saying good bye to the deceased by the relatives are essential to children's healing.

The processes that are usually undertaken during the funeral, including the words said during the burial service provides some comfort to the bereaved. Religion is a system of faith and worship religious ritual plays a significant psychological healing process to many people especially the deceased family especially if they are religious. They serve to bring to reality that which is unbelievable and to provide a way for the mourner to embrace closure by saying verbally or symbolically that, which needs to be said, for

example seeing the deceased body in the casket, singing funeral songs or reading to comfort the bereaved. The bereaved learners would use their spiritual senses to accept, cope and adjust to the loss they are experiencing. A funeral is considered a valuable ritual in assisting the bereaved adjust to the loss of loved one (Klicker cited by Brown, 1997). For many, seeing the dead body is the affirmation that the deceased is indeed dead. Denying children ritual is denying them a very important step in the process of saying goodbye. In order to fully realise death, it is imperative for you to see some evidence of it (seeing the dead body).

Bereaved people say such things as:

“ I want to remember my mother as she was when she went out the door to the prom.” I want to remember grandma as she used to be joking around with dad.”

It is desirable to have these kinds of loving memories because they provide emotional warmth, but they need to be viewed in the proper perspective (Staudacher 1987). Having seen the deceased in the casket, attended and participated in the funeral arrangement, you will be less likely to deny something you have seen or participated in (Staudacher 1987).

One's spirituality plays important role in helping him/her to adjust to the death of loved one. Spirituality is the feeling of interconnectedness with a higher power, (Kirkwood 1993). Spirituality is often the lens through which people interpret their world and their reality, as they search to understand themselves, their needs and their relationships to self, other, nature and God, Kirkwood (1993), therefore awareness and appreciation of a bereaved learner's and family's orientation is essential to holistic care. It is always important to know if the learner's and family's religious affiliation is a source of strength and support and was used to meet needs in the past. Equally it is also important to understand if an individual's religious beliefs are a source of fear and distress (Kirkwood, 1993).

2.3.1 DEATH IN THE FAMILY

Most families exist in some type of homeostatic balance, and works as a system in which the malfunction of one component affects the entire system, and the loss of a significant person in that family group can imbalance this homeostasis and cause the family to feel pain and seek help:

“ Knowledge of the total family configuration, the functioning position of the person in the family, and the overall level of life adaptation are important for any one who attempts to help a family before, during or after death”

Bowen (1978:328) as referred by Worden (2000)

Specific factors that affect the grieving process and influence the degree of family disruptions have been identified. These include: stages of the family life cycle, role played by the deceased, power, affection and communication patterns, cultural factors (Vess and Davies, 1986, cited by Worden 2000).

The concept of family therapy is based on the belief that the family is an interaction unit in which all members influence each other. Therefore, it is not sufficient to treat each individual in relationship to the deceased and to deal with his/her grief without relating it to the total family network. The characteristics of individual family members help determine the character of the family system (Vess & Davies, 1986, referred to by Worden 2000).

Knowing the significance of the deceased to the child will help the school or any one interested in assisting and understanding the needs of the child in his grieving process. Simultaneously understanding the role played by each family member including the deceased will help the school and the interested parties to acknowledge the needs of the child and the support to offer (Vess & Davies 1986, cited by Worden 2000).

Death of a grandparent

In most cases children's first experience with death in the family may be the death of a grandparent. A grandparent's death occurs more frequently in the life of a child than death of a parent. The child's reaction to this death will depend on the closeness of the relationship and the warmth and frequency of the intervention. The child might also be affected by his/her own parent's distress at the loss. Webb (1993) points out that in most cases when the grandparent has suffered a prolonged illness, the parent will be stressed by the pulls in two directions: towards the heavy responsibilities of caring for the children and towards expected obligations for the dying and surviving parent, for example the mother is expected to comfort, care and love his/her children simultaneously mourning for the deceased relative and at the same time provides support for the surviving parents.

Death of the parent

The death of a parent is one of the most fundamental losses a child can face. Ideally, parents support their children, both physically and emotionally; they provide a stable home environment in which children grow and mature; and they serve both as the children's protectors and as their models... The loss of a parent to death and its consequences in the home and in the family changes the very core of the child's existence (Worden 1996:9).

When a parent dies, life, as the child knows it, is disturbed and greatly changed. This will be a time of pain and confusion for the child. The children's emotional responses and behaviours to the loss are highly influenced by the reactions of the surviving parent and other adults. The parents should accept loss and grieve openly rather than suppressing the pain. Children should be told the truth about the cause of the death and other related information. As parents grieve they should not be overwhelmed by grief but should be in charge of the situation.

When a sibling dies

When children lose a parent to death and those who lose a sibling to death will both face grief with parent(s) whose own grief may make it difficult for them to be emotionally available. The difference, though, is that when a child has a sibling die, they at least have two parents available. One of the parents may be more available to recognize and respond to the needs of the children (Worden, 1996). The school can play a pivotal role as loco-parentis and provides love, care, and moral support and provides guidance to ease the stress associated with the loss of a sibling.

Death of a sibling may change the life of the child in several ways. The parents might become over-protective of the surviving children for fear of losing them too. The once familiar role of a brother or sister becomes the role of the parent and the child may not be sure of what the parents expect him/her to do. For some children losing a sibling might mean losing an ever-present companion and confidant (Palmatier, 1998).

2.3.2 TELLING THE CHILD OF THE LOVED ONE'S DEATH

Even though this is not likely to be the first death the adult has experienced, it may quite likely be the first for the child. A special sensitivity and awareness are necessary when the child is being told of the loved one's death. The following guidelines may prove helpful (Staudacher 1987):

- Use language that is appropriate to the age of the child.
- Use language that is free of philosophical, religious, or sentimental references.
- Tell the truth about death, identifying the cause of death without giving the details, which are unnecessary or disturbing.
- Do not expect the child to respond in a way, which is "acceptable" to adults; for example, with overt sadness.
- Observe how the child appears to be feeling.
- Allow the child to release strong immediate feelings, which may even include anger or bitterness.
- After sharing the most important and basic information about the death, allow the child to take the lead, to ask questions.

- Answer the child's questions readily and honestly. If the child asks a question for which there seems to be no answer, the child should be told that the answer is unclear or not available and as soon as there is more information it will be shared with the child.
- Reassure the child about his or her place within the family; emphasize that the family exists and she is part of it "just like always. "Show affection, support, and acceptance of the child. The counsellor could also use the above points as he or she goes through the counselling session with the bereaved child.

Following a death in the immediate family, children who are survivors are very concerned about their own physical and social welfare (Staudacher 1987). This concern is made evident by the questions they commonly ask when they learn that a family member is gone. They want to know to what extent their well being will be affected. Will we have to move? Will I still sleep in my bed? Can I still go to school? Unlike an adult, a child is helpless to make decisions about, or to exert control over, his or her own welfare. For that reason, the child survivor needs to be assured that the immediate world will stay put. Specifically, the child needs to know: the family will stay together. The child will not have to move the child's daily routine will remain, for the most part unchanged. The child can play with the same friends, and go to the same school (Staudacher 1987).

The care taking adult in conjunction with the school counsellor need to offer this reassurance repeatedly and consistently, whenever the child exhibits anxiety or insecurity regarding home, family or routine.

2.3.3 DEATH IN THE SCHOOL

For a child, experience of loss of a classmate or schoolmate may be a traumatic event that can evoke distress, anger and guilt, and bring to life previous traumas (Sutcliffe, Tafnell and Cornish 1998, cited in Bowie 2000). The sudden death of a child in school is likely to have traumatic effects that reverberates through the entire school system and affects all its members.

Swihart, Silliman and McNeil (1992) report that the majority of students, who they were interviewing after the death of a classmate, indicated that they felt changed because of their peer's death. They said they appreciated friends more but also think more about dying, wondering what happens after death and worrying more about death. Two categories of grief responses were that some students wanted more time to talk about the loss while others wanted the school system to get on with life and not bring up the topic. They all wanted to adjust to pain, some by working it through and others by avoiding it.

Recently there has been a tragic shooting incident at an American Academic Campus. About thirty two pupils were gunned down by another fellow student this year 2007 (<http://www.bbcnews.com>). This event may have negatively impacted on the survived pupils by instilling fear and insecurity. To assist these children the educators must assure students that careful planning has taken place to ensure their safety at school and those precautions should be communicated to them.

This incident will call for the concerned school to have in place proper bereavement intervention strategies as well as pre knowledge about death on the surviving learners.

2.3.4 COPING WITH GRIEF

Coping with bereavement is not a regular phase in adolescent life. The young person has to face normal environmental and physiological demands, and coping with the death of a loved one calls for new skills, for example, survival skills, problem solving skills and decision-making skills. Coping is a process of managing specific external and/ or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person.

According to Stroebe and Schut (1999) coping is a dynamic process including the stressors associated with bereavement, and the cognitive strategies involved in coming to terms with the death of a relative. These authors have developed a dual process model of coping with bereavement by incorporating and adapting existing perspective of bereavement and cognitive theories. The model indicates two categories of stressors: loss orientation and restoration orientation. The former refers to the concentration on the loss experience itself; that is, emotional reactions such as yearning, reminiscing and relief.

The latter focuses on the adjustment to secondary consequences of loss: reorganisation of life without the loved one. The central component of the model is Oscillation, which refers to dynamic back - and - forth loss - orientation and restoration - orientated coping.

The model denotes that the bereaved person at times will be confronted by the loss; at other times they will avoid memories (Stroebe & Schut 1999). The bereaved goes through the healing process of facing the reality of death by learning to deal with denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance of death. The other challenge faced by the bereaved student is the task of dealing with major tasks towards successful adjustment to the loss. The bereaved student should be helped to handle these challenges as a way of healing process.

Support from classmates seems to be rare. However, adolescents who have lost a close friend receive almost no support in their grief. Bereaved adolescents perceived self - help as important too. The ability to perceive oneself as worthwhile is linked to the capability of handling self and negotiating concerns in the environment (Stroebe as cited in Stroebe & Schut, 1999). The bereaved adolescent needs psychological help to be able to withstand the test of time during the grief. The child should perceive death as a natural process and indiscriminative in character. Schools programs should teach children about death and provide them with psychotherapy.

The adaptive recovery from the death of a loved one improves social and cognitive resources, self - esteem and health (Rask, Kaunonen & Ilmonen 2002).

Callahan (2005, cited in: <http://www.helping guide org.mental>) proposed some strategies to cope with grief after the loss of a loved one:

- ❖ Self expression
- ❖ Physical self care
- ❖ Emotional self care:
- ❖ Good Social Support

One of the key element of healthy grieving is allowing your emotions to surface in order to work through them in the long run, trying to stuff down your feelings in the belief that they will fade with time, is counter-productive (Callahan 2005). When ignored, grief causes pain that is sometimes so much excruciating that people want to numb and escape it through alcohol or medications. But the grieving process you block is the natural return to interest and meaning in life that follows. Those grieving learners should be encouraged to carry on with their grieving process rather than being discouraged.

Self Expression

Talking: You deserve to express yourself at this difficult time. Talk about your loved one to others or to God (and encourage them to do so too). If they are uncomfortable gently let them know that part of your healing process is getting it off your chest.

Remember: Let this be an opportunity to reflect on the good time. Looking back, what do you appreciate about the contributions of your loved one? What are the moments you spent together that you cherish the most? Do things to honour and remember your loved one. If he/she loved flowers, plant gardens, support the organisation that was important to your loved one.

Physical self care

Get enough sleep. This will benefit you. If you are tired during the day, give yourself a chance to sit or lie down. Resting your body will help your emotional reaction.

Exercise regularly: Whether you like it or not, get some sort of physical exercise every day. Pay attention to the quality of what you eat. Take time to eat nutritious meals while sitting down, avoid processed or *fast food* (even though you may be pressed for time and not feel like cooking).

Emotional Self care

Forgive- You may need to forgive that person for a past hurt and forgive yourself if need be, then move on. Maybe you said something you regret.

Good social support

There are people who want to help you get through this tiring experience: friends, loved ones, pastoral Counsellors, bereavement Counsellors, trained layperson and professionals. Often people want to help, but do not know what to do:

- Accept help that feels good
- It is right to tell people who want to help how they can best help you. Some people can take time to just listen and hold you to show empathy and physical support as you cry.
- A good friend might even laugh with you in the midst of your pain.

A PRAYER WHEN A LOVED ONE DIES AFTER A LONG AND PAINFUL ILLNESS:

I miss you, I am lonely without. I am devastated that you were taken from me. I am angry that you have to suffer so. It was hard to see you in your torment and pain. But that is not how I will remember you.

I will always remember you full of life and warmth and kindness. I will remember the laughter and the love. I will remember your vitality and your grace.

Your death left a gaping hole in my life. But hard as it is to be without you. I take comfort in the knowledge that you are at last in peace and free of pain.

Rest in peace. God bless you Amen

From "Talking to God" by Rabbi Naomi Levy (cited in Kubbler- Ross 1969).

2.3.5. PLACE OF DEATH IN THE CURRICULUM

The Botswana Three Year Junior Secondary Moral Education Syllabus endeavours to cover the following objectives pertaining to death and bereavement:

General Objective

Students must know and understand what death is, its moral implications and effects on the community. Below are some of the specific objectives of Moral Education in junior schools:

- *Explain what death is and state causes of death such as accidents, war, hunger.*
- *Explain the effects of death on the bereaved and society.*
- *Discuss the kind of support given to the bereaved (counselling, emotional support, academic assistance such as giving extra lessons to cover up for the missed time).*

2.3.6 WHAT IS DEATH IN THE CONTEXT OF MORAL EDUCATION?

Death is a word used to mean the end of something, usually the end of life. Death is sometimes called ‘the great equaliser’ because it comes to all people alike: the rich, the poor, presidents, beggars, the clever, and the ignorant, male, female, young and old (Israel, Mangope, Masheka and Paya 2001). Any school bereavement program may emphasise on teaching children about death and how students should perceive its implications.

From an ecological point of view, it is necessary for people to die in order to make room for the world to support those who are being born (Israel et al 2001; Charakupa and Tselaesele 1998).

2.3.7 INFUSION OF DEATH TOPIC IN THE CURRICULUM OF BOTSWANA SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS.

Setswana as one of the subject in secondary schools explains the cultural significance and value of funeral rituals (past and present) and the traditional roles that individuals play in the process. Religious Education syllabi cover topics related to the ‘rites of passage’ on death, rituals associated with death in different religions such as: Botswana Traditional religion, Sikhism, Shintoism, Hinduism and Islam. The topic of death is briefly covered in Biology especially when it talks about ecosystem, food chain and food web, carbon cycle, nitrogen cycle and decomposition of organic matter, diseases and

sicknesses. Social studies and Geography syllabi deals with statistical interpretation of charts, tables and graphs dealing with death and birth rates, populations and historical battles and wars Botswana Ministry of education (Setswana, Religious Education, Biology syllabus, and Social studies syllabus, 1995).

The above revelation indicates that the topics of death and bereavement are not sufficiently and adequately covered in many subjects taught in the schools. For those subjects that cover death related topics do not go into details especially when it comes to death and bereavement. No subject talks about the bereavement intervention strategies that are in place to assist those students who lose relatives to death.

2.3.8 CAUSES OF DEATH

Death can be either natural or unnatural. Natural death is one that simply happens in the course of nature. Unnatural death is one that occurs as a freak accident (what some people call an act of God), or as the result of human action or inaction (Israel, Mangope, Masheka and Paya 2001). Students should appreciate various causes of death. This would in turn assist them to acknowledge the fact that death is part of our lives and it is partly caused by our actions and activities.

Causes of death are:

Old age

Diseases

Murder

War

Illegal abortion

Accidents (such as car crashes)

Suicide

Death is something very few people like to think about, or talk about. For many communities it is a taboo subject. People often use expressions that avoid the finality of the word 'death'. For instance, when they speak of a person who has died, they use terms

like 'deceased', 'late', 'passed away', 'laid to rest' and 'asleep to the world' (Israel et al. 2001).

When someone you know dies, such as a relative or friend or someone who comes from the same area, then his or her family, friends and community all feel the impact of the death. We need to behave in ways that will help to reduce the shock, loss and pain that are felt by the bereaved and the community (Israel et al. 2001). Thus when there is death, people come together to offer support. In that way, they comfort the bereaved and also affirm the strength of their community feeling. This indicates the role played by the community in assisting the bereaved at home. This also calls for other institutions such as schools to come up with bereavement programs and strategies for helping school children during bereavement (Israel et al. 2001). The bereaved need much support and care to overcome their grief at the loss of a loved one. The support provided by the community can be divided into two main categories:

Emotional / spiritual support (ii) Material support.

Emotional and spiritual support can be given in verbal ways. People in the community can counsel the bereaved in order to help them work through their grief and move on with life. The bereaved need to talk about the deceased. In talking about the dead and remembering treasured memories they can begin to come to terms with the fact that the person is physically dead, but to take comfort from the idea that their memory or spirit lives on.

Members of the community can behave towards and talk to the bereaved in such a way that they know that they are not alone, in other words, the community shares the rituals of grief. In Jewish families, a week of mourning in which people come (usually with gifts of food) to sit with the family of the deceased is observed. With Christians the rituals often take the form of prayers, sermons or teachings, singing every day until the burial. Religious worship, in whatever form, provides a way to console the bereaved (Israel et al. 2001).

Material support is provided as soon as the members of the community hear about a person's death. They will go to the home of the deceased in groups; sometimes they assemble there in order to find out how they can help the bereaved family. People in the community can give material support by: Collecting firewood and giving gifts of food. Relatives of the deceased also gather together to discuss how they can help with the funeral arrangements

2.4 HOW DO BATSWANA OFFER ASSISTANCE?

Batswana offer assistance to the bereaved family by: Providing food such as mealie-meal, sugar, bread and tealeaf donating a cow or two for slaughter to help the bereaved in the case of uncles of the deceased). Lending extra cooking utensils such as pots, plates and other necessary items like chairs and tents are also common.

Making fire and fetching water to cook the food (in case of women). Batswana provide transport for others who are attending the funeral (in case of those who have vehicles).

- Digging the grave (in case of men).
- Providing financial contributions towards the cost of the food and even towards the cost of the coffin.
- Helping to clean up afterwards in case of women while men make sure all the things that were borrowed for the funeral are returned.

All of these are done because funerals are usually not seen as the business of an individual family, but a ritual involving the whole community. Part of the reason for community involvement is traditional. In Setswana culture, the gathering of people at the bereaved home or compound both before and after the funeral was intended to offer comfort and condolences. Also members of the community provide such support because they know that often the bereaved are in such a state that they are not able to make decisions, or cope with the tasks on their own. The support offered does not end after the funeral. Emotional, spiritual and material help are also needed during the period of

mourning. This is part of the traditional values upheld by the Batswana, who prize a sense of community and cooperation (Israel et al 2001).

In school the/a situation, when a child loses a relative, the school contributes money to the bereaved child. Condolences are sent to the concerned child's family. School staff and students would attend memorial services. The school would also assist with furniture such as chairs and tables. In addition to this assistance the school transport would be made available a day before and during the funeral day. The school staff members and learners would normally attend the funeral service. The school of the affected child would send a spokesperson to talk on behalf of the school. After the funeral service, when the child goes back to school, extra lessons are normally provided for the child to cover for the missed lessons. At times counselling is given to the child, of course the provision of extra lessons and counselling services are not always offered consistently by individual schools.

2.4.1 EFFECTS OF DEATH ON THE BEREAVED AND SOCIETY

Economic Effects: Unexpected death can lead to orphans and poverty within a family due to the loss of breadwinners. This may lead to a bereaved student dropping out of school due to lack of school uniform, lunch money or even bus fare.

Social Effects: Conflicts between family members over the cause and reasons of death. For example, children may blame the remaining parents to have not done enough to save the deceased hence having contributed to the occurrence of the death. The deceased could have been skilled labour, educated and productive person. The death of such a person would have a negative developmental impact on the children of the deceased who perceived the deceased as a role model, aspiration, comfort and a valuable resource towards their full actualisation.

Political Effects: The loss of an important national leader can lead to destabilisation within the community members over succession. The deceased may have been perceived by the bereaved as their leader who honoured virtues and acted properly in his/her family. The deceased may have been a leader who inspired his/her children with reverence and

respect. To the bereaved children, they have lost a head of the family who contributed positively to the family discussions.

Socially the death of a local personality or leader, such as a chief, can lead to community grief, fear and confusion. In the case of school when the student dies, this negatively impacts on other students because they lose a playmate, classmate, a role model if he or she was a good student academically or socially. Any death that affects school child destabilises the school, as some programs would need to be scheduled to cater for the death. Death in the school does not only affect one or two students but many because most of them are related.

The funeral

The value for the bereaved of attending the viewing and funeral of the deceased has been documented extensively in the literature (Doka, 1995; Grollman, 1993; Fitzgerald, 1992; Morgan, 1990; Schaefer & Lyons, 1986; Worden, 1996). The funeral is overwhelmingly considered a valuable ritual in helping the bereaved adjust to the loss of a loved one (Klicker, 1997).

For many, seeing the dead body is the only tangible affirmation they have that the person has really died. In such cases, seeing truly is believing. It is a powerful and helpful first step in adjusting to the death of someone they love. Aside from providing this visual confirmation of death, the funeral offers support and comfort in a variety of ways.

As a final disposition for the body of the deceased: One of the harsh realities of death is the necessity for the final disposition of the physical body of the deceased. This final disposition, whether it is burial, cremation, or entombment, can be accomplished with as much or as little ceremony as desired.

As a religious ritual: Religion has a prominent position in many people's lives. They receive comfort and reassurance in religious beliefs and ceremonies. For most people, the

funeral is principally a religious ceremony that allows them to fulfill the final phase of their spiritual life.

Funeral as a means of social support. The pain of grief is never more intense than when experienced alone. The coming together of friends and family to pay tribute to the deceased and give respects to the survivors provides comfort to all who experience it. Although some people feel awkward or frightened when attending a funeral, almost everyone feels a sense of belonging when expressing condolences, offering acts of concern, and supporting the survivors, alone with a sense of pride that others respected the deceased enough to attend the funeral.

As a celebration of life: Everyone, no matter how famous or unknown, rich or poor, young or old, affects the lives of others, and contributes to life of his family and community in some way. The funeral may be the only opportunity for an organized reflection and recognition of his life.

As an acceptable environment for expression of feelings: Many people, including students, find it difficult to express their feelings in public. They worry about appearances or feel embarrassed. The funeral is a venue in which you are encouraged to openly express your feelings. You are in atmosphere where everybody is experiencing similar feelings and where the social taboo of crying in public does not apply. This expression of the feeling acknowledges the need to encourage and allow school going children to attend the funeral. The school environment should be conducive for the children to freely and openly express their misery and sadness over their deceased relative.

2.4.2 FUNERALS IN BOTSWANA

Traditionally, many Batswana Christians hold funerals during weekends. Relatives and friends who are not working may come and visit the bereaved for some days before the funeral to help with the arrangements. Prayers are usually said every evening until the day of the burial. Nowadays, some funerals have become social occasions and expensive. Not only because of the high cost of caskets and other funeral expenses but also for food and accommodation given to visitors. For many poor people, this is a burden that can create long-term financial hardship, especially when it involves the loss of a family breadwinner (Israel et al. 2001).

On the side of student who lost the parent through death, it means he or she has lost a breadwinner, a role model, a parent, love, care and support. Financially the child is going to need school fees, money for food, transport and clothing. Socially, every child needs a parent for guidance, love and happiness. With out the parent the child's future is bleak.

By contrast, some cultures perform burial ceremonies quite differently. Muslims are required to bury their dead within 48 hours of death and the women usually do not attend such services. Hindus cremate their dead on a funeral pyre of wood and the ashes of the dead person are later scattered into a river (Israel et al. 2001). This is important to mention more so that school in Botswana are multi – racial hence there is need to understand how other nationalities dispose of their dead bodies and other funeral rituals. This knowledge will help the caregivers to provide relevant assistance when handling bereaved Muslim children.

2.4.3 THE NEED FOR FUNERAL WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THIS STUDY

Funeral does much more than validate your loved one's death. It serves also as an acceptable outlet for a physical show of emotion, and perhaps even more important. It provides a forum for sharing the person with others, sharing what the person loved, enjoyed, and gave (Staudacher 1987).

The funeral not only says “I’m hurting,” “I’m missing,” “thank you for having lived”, “your life has left this effect upon your relatives and friends”. As the funeral publicly acknowledges the end of the person’s life in the way that the family and friends knew it, it reunites those people whose lives touched because of the loved one. The final service or memorial puts together an immediate, though temporary, support group.

2.4.4. THE CHILD AND THE FUNERAL

Some adults believe that children do not belong at funerals because the sadness of the service will be too much to bear. To the contrary, researchers have found that children get a clearer sense of the finality of death when they witness evidence that the loved one’s earthly life has ended (Staudacher 1987).

It helps to be aware of the specific benefits to be gained by the child who attends the funeral. The child will be better able to understand death and will usually have less difficulty integrating death into the total life cycle. The child survivor is better able to differentiate himself from the dead loved one. The child’s fantasies about death and burial, which can be far more disturbing than reality, are dispelled. The child feels equal to other family members because he or she has been included in a serious and profound family event. The child perceives herself as a vital part of the surviving family, an important member who has been accepted into the circle of deep intimacy created by the loss. The child is able to see that others love his or her deceased loved one, respected, and will be missed by many people. This confirms the loved one’s value and is a source of pride for the survivor (Staudacher 1987).

While attendance at the funeral should be allowed, no child should be forced to attend. A child may choose not to attend for a number of reasons. He/She may be afraid (Staudacher 1987). She may feel guilty about her relationship with the loved one. He/She may feel embarrassment or shame because of the death or toward surviving members of the family. What ever the reason, the child’s choice should be respected and he or she should not be coaxed, condemned or excluded from other family activities associated with the loss, such as the social gathering of family and afterwards (Staudacher 1987).

Should Students attend the funeral or Wake?

Attending a funeral may be a new or frightening event for some students, possibly their first experience with cultural rituals surrounding death. To help them feel secure during this time, a familiar adult should also be at the funeral home to support them if needed. If a family member is not available, someone from the school can be just as helpful (Stevenson & Powers as cited in Staudacher, 1987). This support can range from simply being in the funeral home if you are needed to accompany the student into the room, to providing the security of touch by holding a student's hand, to putting your arm around a student, to just being a shoulder to cry on (Stevenson & Power as referred by Staudacher, 1987).

2.4.5 PREPARATION FOR THE FUNERAL

When a child chooses to go to the funeral, an adult should then talk with the child beforehand about what to expect. Depending upon the child's age and maturity, he/she needs to be informed about several, or all, of the following:

Where the funeral will be held?.

What kind of room the family will be seated in (small, quiet, with pews or chairs).

Who will sit next to the child?

What the child will hear (music, a talk that will be about the loved one, prayers).

Where the person who has died will be (in a closet casket, open casket, in another location).

What other people will be likely to do (sit quietly, cry, come up to the child and hug him or talk to him)? What the child should do when people express their condolences? The reason for going to the cemetery and how the cemetery will look?.

When events, sights, and expectations for the child's behaviour are explained, the young survivor will be less anxious and frightened about the services. An informed child is better able to participate in the necessary customs and ceremonies when he or she feels aware and at least somewhat confident (Staudacher 1987).

The child's participation is also made easier if he/she is allowed to ask questions, has physical contact with an adult (mother holding his hand, grandfather sitting with his arm around him). If there is an open casket the child may want to join the others who pass by. If passing the open casket is the child's choice, he or she can be permitted to write a loving note, draw a picture or give a sibling a flower as a token of devotion (Staudacher 1987).

2.4.6 BOTSWANA GOVERNMENT FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE BEREAVED.

The bereaved/orphans and other disadvantaged students are normally exempted from paying school fees. The Government has designed criteria to use to identify students who are exempted from paying school fees. One criterion used is the student whose parents are terminally ill and incapable of caring for the student materially (Ministry of Education 2006).

Social workers are responsible for assessing cases referred to them. They will then recommend to the regional Education office students qualifying for exemption. The Regional Education office, after assessing cases, will send the list of exempted students to their respective schools Ministry of Education (2006). Students also play a big role in helping to identify students in need of help. In their interaction with each other, students get to know each other's circumstances very well. They are, therefore, best placed to refer other students to the school/college management. The success of this exercise encourage students making these referrals in a responsible, sensitive and confidential manner (Ministry of Education 2006)

School/college Management-Institutional Structures such as the Head of Department; class teacher system, Guidance and counseling system, Pastoral care programs, Teaching and Non-Teaching staff in general can refer cases to the relevant authorities (Ministry of Education, 2006).

In the school, upon identifying a student who needs bereavement intervention assistance, other students and/or subject teachers will refer the case to the class teacher who will in turn refer it to the senior teacher Guidance. The case will then be passed on to the Head of Pastoral office; however, when the child desperately needs intensive bereavement counseling or grief specialist then referral to the social workers will be done by the pastoral office (Ministry of education 2006).

2.4.7 BEREAVEMENT INTERVENTIONS

Bereavement interventions are designed to help the survivor or family accept the reality of loss and adjust to an environment without the deceased; these interventions include:

- Identifying support systems
- Access to bereavement specialists (social workers, grief counselors, pastors or psychologists as well as bereavement resources.
- Allowing for individual differences.
- Actualizing the loss and facilitating living without the deceased.
- Identifying and expressing feelings
- Disenfranchising grief-acknowledge and validate the survivor's relationship with the deceased, feelings, grief reactions and support his/her need for ritual' memorial service/funeral and traditions.
- Public funerals, memorial services, rites, rituals and traditions and private rituals.
 - Spiritual care.
 - Identifying need for additional assistance and making referrals.

Many schools lack crisis intervention strategies in place in the event of the death of a child, teacher or staff member. Such strategies enable quick appropriate responses to children's possible reaction. Educators should have an understanding of loss and grief, feel comfortable talking about the death and grief and be aware of community resource on the issues (<http://www.erinshouse.org/new-page-5.htm> *Grief Impact in the school*).

Cultural Considerations in end of life care

Although death is universal, the grief response that death elicits is cultural. How individual grieves is determined by cultural norms, expectations and practices and then by family traditions and individual preferences. Our beliefs, attitudes, values about death, dying, grief and loss are initially moulded by these societal dictates. Within societies, various religious, philosophical and ethnic groups further determine and refine the range of appropriate responses, feelings, behaviours and rituals (<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/el nec>.)

The school should appreciate the child's cultural practices when it comes to bereavement, for example how does the child grief, mourn and behaves within his/her community. This knowledge will help the caregiver to provide relevant assistance.

Spirituality and culture are among the most important factors that structure human experience, values, behaviours and the illness patterns leading to death. Given the uniqueness and individuality of each person, even people of the same religion or culture may have different backgrounds, experiences, needs, concerns and interpretations of death. The knowledge of individual uniqueness by the care giver would assist him/her to accord appropriate care, support and treatment to the bereaved (<http://www.aacn.nche.edu/el nec>)

Childhood Bereavement Services

Dealing with bereavement can not only challenge secondary students completing the developmental tasks that our society sets for the later adolescent years, but also imperil the student's remaining in school and graduating. It is the best interests of secondary schools to develop and implement a variety of effective interventions to assist bereaved students (Rolls 2003).

Schools are communities devoted to scholarly endeavors and should explicitly incorporate the dimension of compassion and caring (Rolls 2003). For example if there

was anything taught to other students in the absent of the bereaved student, this child will not be given cover work to make for the lost time. Bereaved students do not get adequate bereavement counseling.

Balk (2003) has came up with four specific actions for a bereavement center which are as follows:

- To train non bereaved students

- To provide peer support

- To provide structured interventions for secondary school students at risk of bereavement complications

- To raise consciousness about bereavement in high school campus.

Some reasons put forward by Balk and Cerney (1996); Lampe, Sharpe, Schwinn, Holen, Cook and Dubois (1998, as cited by Balk 2003) for the bereaved returning students not getting help from both teachers and students are fear or ignorance about grief. Some feel overwhelmed with the distress they recognize, some do not know what is the appropriate things to say or do and some conclude they have no obligations in the matter Barnett, McCoy, Thompson and Pfeiffer cited in Balk 2003). These various explanations offer intervention possibilities in high schools.

Studies conducted at Kansas State University, the University of Arizona, Oklahoma State University, and university of Memphis (Balk, 1997; Bemelmans, 1999; Hair, 1998 as referred by Balk 2003) have indicated that 22-30% of college/ school students are in the first 12 months of grieving the death of a family member or of a friend.

Adolescents in schools face developmental transitions such as forming autonomous lives and developing a clear sense of direction and forming intimate relationships. In effect, they are faced with forming a stable, focused identity, regardless of their circumstance Balk (1985), Marcia (1980), Perry (1970) and Selman (1980) as referred by Balk (2003).

Secondary school students who are grieving can find their identity formation challenged as they begin to question seriously their own competence and self-worth. In particular, individuals may experience considerable difficulty recovering from grief and thereby endanger the prospects of gaining the maturity needed to live filled with a sense of autonomy, direction, and intimacy (Balk et.al, 1985, cited in Balk, 2003). Fundamental losses can undermine individual's self confidence and threaten the person's self-image (Braumers and Tomic, Greenfield Hufford 2000, referenced by Balk 2003).

Bereaved students may doubt that outcomes they desire are within their personal control. It is crucial for bereaved students to maintain or regain a sense of personal control and to believe they can achieve outcomes they want (Hogan and Greenfield, 1991 cited by Balk 2003). The intensity and duration of grief can lead to doubt that a sense of balance will ever return. We all know of persons whose acute grief reactions led them to question if they were going crazy (Hogan et al cited by Balk 2003).

It is the contention of this study that secondary schools should provide panoply of approaches (appropriate intervention strategies) to assist the bereaved students in the schools. It would seem rational for schools of adolescent and late teen learners to develop and implement effective interventions to assist bereaved students (Costello and Weiss 2000, referred in Balk 2003)). The effects of bereavement place students at risk of doing poorly in their studies and perhaps, of dropping out of school (Wrenn referred by Balk 2003).

A fundamentally important question to examine is 'what do Secondary Schools bereaved students need and want? Wrenn (cited in Balk 2003), who pioneered institutional preparedness for schools to deal with students, has identified several needs of grieving students. Here is an abbreviated quote:

"They need a specific place in school readily recognised as a place to go for support or information" (Wrenn 1999 p.133).

In other words they ought to be intervention strategies for the bereaved students in schools, so as to receive bereavement guidance and counseling services.

They need to adjust to a school environment that seems unchanged by the death. The School community should acknowledge and appreciate the bereaved circumstances and handle students with care and not necessarily giving them special treatment that would make them uncomfortable (Wrenn 1999 referred by Balk, 2003).

They need to know what normal grieving entails and not become worried that they are going crazy. They need teachers

“to allow late work. A make-up examination, or an incomplete work for a class” (Wrenn, 1999:134).

Knowing that so many students at any time struggle with grief, schools ought to provide accessible, sensitive, and effective outlets to assist in grief recovery (Balk, 2003).

We know that grief work can seriously jeopardise study and learning. Grief can interfere with students accomplishing their chief developmental tasks, and thereby jeopardise their adult contributions as parents, lovers, friends, and contributors in the world of work (Wrenn, 1999).

Bereaved students find peers willing to listen or be present when stories of grief surface helpful, rather than places offering nurturance to the bereaved. It is not relatively enough to provide academic or material help only, but bereaved learners need a caring and empathetic person to listen to his/her traumatic experience. Schools are driven by competing demands to produce, stay on task, and have fun (Wrenn, 1999).

2.4.8 CULTURAL INTERPRETATION OF DEATH BY THE AFRICAN SOCIETY.

Any traumatic event like death that has a negative impact on the life of the student needs to be interpreted and perceived from that child cultural perspective. This perspective would determine the relevant assistance to offer to the bereaved.

Preparation for Death

The preparation for death could be either formal or informal. In societies where there is a strong entrenchment of the rule of the law, the legal dimension to death is very important. In such societies preparation for death is normally done in a formal way. Some of the formal ways people prepare for death include buying a life insurance policy, drafting a will, or having a living will (Eyetsimetan 2002). A life insurance policy stipulates a certain amount of money to be paid by insurance policy to the beneficiaries named in the policy, upon the death of policy holder. Usually the spouse (if the deceased was married) and children are the beneficiaries. This is one way to ensure that, in the event of death, the immediate family members are cared for financially.

A legal will allows a person to state how the estate is to be dispersed upon death. An appointed executor oversees the dispersion of all assets and payment of debts (Eyetsimetan 2002). Another formal legal document is a living will that allows a person to give specific directives to terminate his/her life should ‘‘extraordinary’’ means be taken to extend it. Sometimes an individual gives another person the right to make such decisions on her/his behalf. When this happens, the person with the right to make decisions on behalf of another person is said to have a durable power of attorney (Eyetsimetan 2002).

All these legal measures taken in preparation for death are seen in most Western societies because of their high level of adherence to the rule of law, and the need to protect their individualist values even in the grave (Leming and Dickinson cited in Eyetsimetan 2002). For many individuals however these formal preparations remind them of death and would rather not be reminded of it. Therefore, formal preparation for death only occurs when they go through the dying process. The dying process, unlike sudden death, allows for time to take care of unfinished businesses (Doka 1989). In the case of learning

institutions, bereavement intervention strategies, could be put in place in order to assist the affected children with emotional and educational counseling Worden (1991).

Death interpretation.

This study is done in a multi- religious country and where there is freedom of worship as far as religion is concerned. Students are taught different religions with the aim of promoting these multifaceted religions. It is worth discussing how these different religions interpret death and bereavement and how a student understands the occurrence of death as far as his/her religious orientation is concerned. This religious perspective will play a significant role in the bereavement healing process.

Christianity

For most Christian, death is seen as a transition phase to a higher, glorious place called heaven where one is joined with other believers, including loved ones, who have gone ahead (Doka and Morgan cited by Eyetsemitan 2002). The qualification for entry into heaven is not by one's works on earth but by accepting God's son, Jesus Christ as one one's savior and redeemer (Mazrui (referred in Eyetsemitan 2002). So there is hope that those who die in Christ will be seen again. It is also because God is sovereign and knows the beginning and the end of our lives even before we were born, that the Christian believer can take consolation in his or her beliefs as to why God " allows" the 5 year old to die instead of 50 year old. God is also a just God who punishes evil (Eyetsemitan 2002). Bereaved Christian believers are aware of this, and in case of death, these children are likely to use any of the following three ways to rationalize the death:

Reunion: The relatives are in heaven where parents and dead children will eventually reunite (most frequently used).

Reverence: The child's death serves some religious purpose, perhaps as an inspiration for children and parents to do some good works.

Retribution- the child's death is a result of the parents or children's sin.

Islam

Muslims believe that a person's actions will be judged by Allah (God) after death, and that the Koran (the holy book of the Muslims) specifies behaviours that are accepted and unaccepted to Allah, upon which judgment will be based. Like Christians, Muslims also believe in the sovereignty of God in matters of loss and they seek consolation in the phrase that "Allah giveth and Allah taketh." (Eyetsmitan 2002).

Traditional African Belief System

The traditional African belief system is also referred to as ancestral worship. Unlike the Christian and Western ways of thinking, the premise for ancestor worship is based on an understanding that the life course is cyclical and not linear (Hofsted 1980, as cited in Eyetsmitan, 2002). Those who are dead, though not physically seen, are alive in a different world and can reincarnate in new births. Furthermore, to be in the world of the dead is to have supernatural powers over those in the world of the living. Such powers include the ability to bless or to curse, and to give life or to take life (Hofsted referred in Eyetsmitan, 2002). The adherents of the traditional African belief system actively engage the dead through worship (which could take the form of food, alcoholic drinks, or money sacrifices and through prayers for blessings and protection. Also when death occurs, divination as to the cause of death is sought from ancestors with death causes usually attributed to spiritual elements (witchcraft, offending one's ancestors or Gods) rather than medical or physical reasons (Hofsted (1980, cited in Eyetsmitan, 2002).

Some people adhere to more than one religious belief system. For example some people profess Christianity and believe in a Christ God but still indulge in traditional religious practices (Harmon as cited in Channing, 1999)). This type of "accommodation" behaviour has been described in other non-Western societies such Southern, Western and Central African societies (Eyetsmitan, 2002).

This type of "accommodation" behaviour could cause a crisis of meaning in death. If, as a Christian, a person believes that God in his sovereign will allowed a five year old to die instead of the 50 year old and, as a traditional religionist, believes that the death of the 5

year old was caused by a neighbour's witchcraft practice, then grieving by this individual becomes complicated (Harmon as referred by Channing 1999).

As people become more educated about legal and financial ways to prepare for death, and as they face death, they is likely to be more attention given to preparation for death in the future. Death (and dying) has multiple dimensions, including religious, legal, and economic. To understand the cultural interpretation of death in any society, it is important to appreciate the religious practices in that society as well as an economic disadvantage after the death of the bereaved (Harmon 1996, referred by Channing, 1999).

2.4.9 Response Planning Procedure

Developing an Arrangement with Non School Professionals

The school could engage other stake holders who have relevant professions to come to school and assist in emergency. These may include such people like social worker, funeral director, and pastor

Hiring substitute teacher

Some classroom teachers may be too upset to be able to function normally or help their students cope. An arrangement should be made with administration and the Parent and Teachers Association Executive Committee for calling in two or three substitute teachers. The financial responsibility for the payment of these substitutes should fall under the Parents and Teacher Association Committee. These may or may not be necessary, but as a precaution they should be called in for at least the first day of school following the crisis. The teacher who might have lost a significant one would not perform in the instructional delivery, hence the need for temporary substitution.

Identifying Crisis Counseling and quiet rooms

There should be another room set aside as a counseling center for people who need to talk to a professional person. Most of the secondary schools in Botswana have these rooms. A school or community professional should be available most of the times in this special room to offer bereavement help.

Formulating a school policy on funeral Attendance

Some students and staff members will wish to attend visiting hours at the funeral home or the actual funeral. The time for the ceremonies may be during school hours. With regard to students, questions such as transportation, parental permission, and supervision must be considered. The issue of staff attendance must also be considered. How many teachers can be released from class to attend? Can special arrangement be made with the family and the funeral home to conduct a service for school members only at some time outside of the normal school hours?

Formulating a Policy on School Remembrance Activities

Some schools conduct, either in addition to or in place of funeral services, a special remembrance activity at the school. This may be a general assembly, tree planting, dedication of part of the yearbook, dedication of a plaque, or lowering of the flag. The specifics of the policy do not have to be worked out ahead of time, but a general policy should be developed. The activities may differ with each death. If a member of the band dies, a ceremony centering on the band might be appropriate.

If someone who was a member of biology club dies, the emphasis may be different. Students must be allowed to have an input in determining the type of activity. This is an excellent method of coping with grief and learning about life and death (Stevenson & Power, as cited in Staudacher 1987). Generally, an ideal policy should have features such as the roles of class teacher, school counselor, school administration, and parents as part of bereavement intervention strategies in schools. The policy will also include bereavement aspects as part of the curriculum contents.

Identification and Referral of At-Risk Students

There are always students who will have a more difficult time adjusting to death than others. These students are considered "at-risk" and include best friends, siblings, boyfriend or girlfriend, and those who may not have been close to the deceased but who

are depressed, under great stress, have experienced other losses, or those who have been suicidal. A typical example is a horrific event that occurred in Diratsame Secondary School in 2002. The event took place when a male teacher was stabbed to death by his girl friend over love related matter. The incident happened when the female teacher had discovered her male partner with other girl friend. It took the school almost a week before normal teaching and learning activities normalised. No appropriate intervention was taken because there was no such strategy in place. Both staff members and students were grieving, crying, and others not coming to school. A similar incident of the boy friend – girl friend love related death occurred in 2006 at the North West University Campus. This incident also disturbed campus daily activities as the survivors tried to cope with the horrific news.

It is important to put in place a grief-crisis intervention immediately after the occurrence of the crisis (Eisenstadt as cited in Dilworth and Hildreth, 1997, referred by Rubel, 1999) reports that the bereavement reaction can be impetus for creative effort, a stunting personality growth and producing the concomitant antisocial acts, destruction of social relationships, and even the taking of one's own life. Therefore immediate crisis intervention is especially important for the survivors who cannot cope with the grief and become suicidal.

What the bereaved need is someone to listen to his/her story and help them understand their unique responses to grief. These needs are met when crises intervention is effectively in place (Aquilera, referenced by Costa and Holliday, 1994).

Mourning and recovery is more difficult due to the violent and sudden nature of their loss. Therefore professional assistance during these first few hours is essential, as the survivors try to cope with the news of the death within the framework of their cultural and religious beliefs (Frazer and Atkins 1995, referred by Rubel 1999: 476)

Katz and Bartone (1998) point out that Freud (1917) and Horowitz (1987) Bowlty (1969) Pollock (1977) Parkes (1972) and Raphael (1983) all referred by Rubel (1999) have

described the psychological process of mourning and recovery in a variety of cultures and situations. They agree that the mourning process functions to facilitate the psychological integration of the loss.

According to Parkes (as referred to Rubel, 1999) when sudden accidental or violent death occurs ---, the greater shock and trauma increases the burden of mourning and recovery. (Horowitz 1978, cited in Rubel, 1999) maintains that recovery from traumatic loss depends upon the working through the resolution of grief, hence it is always important for the care giver (at home or at school) to always assist the bereaved to resolve his/her grief.

Subjects who had high levels of social support had lower levels of mourning grieving and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Sprang and Mc Neil cited in Rubel, 1999).

Bereaved victims get help from their natural support system includes their families, friends, houses of worship, and support service within their local community (Fegley in Leenars and wenchstern, 1998, in Rubel, 1999).

2.5 HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH GRIEF

Kuenning (1987) has outlined some *dos* and *don'ts* that focus on what we as adults can do to help our children understand death. The ideas focus on helping children understand death by exposing them to different concepts that may occur before, during and after death.

These ideas can be utilized by everyone and be applied to different situations. They outline practical ways in which we can help out children understand death. Kuenning's ideas focus on helping children understand death by exposing them to different concepts that may occur before during and after a death. These ideas can be utilized by everyone and can be applied to different situations.

The importance of helping a child through the grieving process cannot be overemphasized. Not only do we need to be aware of our children's feelings and how they cope with the loss but also we have to be sensitive to the fact that they may not be able to handle the situation. Besides helping the child express his/her feelings and working through the grieving process, we also need to be aware of the abnormal reactions that may occur when a child is not able go through the healing process satisfactorily.

Some of the abnormal grief reactions as described by (Aldrich cited in Kuenning,1987) state that we need to familiarise ourselves with these reactions in order to identify children that may be exhibiting them and may need professional counselling. She emphasizes that these reactions may be cries for help, especially when they become intense, last a long time, or both. Below are some of the possible reactions that may be displayed by the bereaved learners

- Anger toward anyone and everyone
- Excessive misbehaving or fighting
- Indifference to activities the young person used to enjoy
- Running away from home
- Truancy
- Rejecting family, friends, authority
- Having difficulty relaxing
- Using drugs or alcohol
- Constant anxiety
- Constant depression and wanting to be alone
- Self- blame or guilt.
- Inability or unwillingness to talk about the person who died
- Talk of reunion with the person who died or a desire to die

2.5.1 SOME MYTHS AND FACTS ABOUT GRIEF

Myths can get in the way of a person's healing; therefore, it is important to learn about them. The following are some of the myths and fact about grief:

Myth: The pain of loss will go away faster if you ignore it.

Fact: Trying to ignore one's pain or keep it from surfacing will only make it worse in the long run. Facing one's grief and dealing with it actively is necessary for true healing to take place.

Myth: It is important to 'be strong' in the face of loss.

Fact: Feeling sad, frightened, and lonely or experiencing other emotions, is a normal reaction to loss. Crying and breaking down does not mean that a person is weak. A person does not need to 'protect' himself or herself or their families by putting on a brave front. Showing one's true feelings helps them and those who are giving them support/assistance.

Myth: If a person does not cry, it means they are not sorry for the loss.

Fact: Crying is a normal response to sorrow, but it is not the only response. Those who do not cry may feel the pain of loss just as deeply as others. They may simply have other ways of showing or coping with it. These people need as much support and comfort from others.

Myth: Moving on with your life means you are forgetting the loss of loved one.

Fact: Moving on means you have accepted your loved one's death. That is not the same as forgetting. One can adjust to a new life while always keeping their loved one's memory as part of them.

Myth: Friends can help the mourner by bringing up the subject of his/her loss.

Fact: People who are grieving usually want and need to talk about their loss, often over and over. Bringing up the topic can give a mourner an opening for talking. But if one does not seem to want to talk, then conversation should not be forced.

Myth: Grief should last about a year.

Fact: There is no time frame for grieving. How long it takes to recover from loss can differ widely from one person to the other.

2.5.2 Myths about children and adolescents concerning death

Myth: *Children do not grieve, or only grieve when they reach a certain age.*

Fact: Children grieve at any age. The grief will vary depending on the child's age, development and experience.

Myth: *The death of a loved one is the only major loss that children and adolescents experience.*

Fact: Children and adolescents experience a range of losses. These can include the normal developmental losses, school transitions, and losses of pets, dreams, and separation caused by divorce or relocation.

Myth: *It is better to shield children from loss, as they are too young to experience tragedy.*

Fact: It is impossible. It is far better to provide children with support as they experience inevitable loss.

Myth: *Children should not go to funerals.*

Fact: Children and adolescents should have the choice as to how they wish to participate in funeral rituals.

Myth: *Children get over loss quickly.*

Fact: No one gets over significant loss, like adults, children learn to live with the loss.

Myth: *Children are permanently scarred by early significant loss.*

Fact: Most people, including children are resilient, while early significant losses can affect development, solid support and strong continuity of care can assist children as they deal with loss.

Myth: *Talking with children is the most therapeutic approach in dealing with loss.*

Fact: There is much value in openly communicating with children and adolescents. But there is also great value in using approaches that allow the child or adolescent other creative ways of expression. Play, art, dance, music, activity and rituals are examples of creative modes of expression that children and adolescents may use to express grief and adapts to loss.

Helping children and adolescents deal with loss is the responsibility of the family. Families do have responsibility, but it is a responsibility shared with other individuals and organisations such as hospices, schools and faith communities as well as the community at large (Kenneth referenced by Kuenning, 1987).

2.5.3 STAGES OF GRIEF

There are different stages of grief. Different authorities divide these stages and name them differently. Elisabeth Kubler - Ross divides these stages as follows:

STAGE	PHYSICAL/ EMOTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE STAGE
1. Denial	shock, confusion, avoidance, feeling of numbness, physical pain, nausea, sleep disturbance, loss of appetite. <i>“This can’t be happening”</i> <i>“Not to him/her”</i>
2. Anger	anger at self, irritability, fatigue, concentration difficulties, feel cheated, refusal to comply with rules, antisocial behaviour <i>“Why?” “Why not me?”</i>

3. Bargaining

Bargaining with God, fantasies, daydreams, nightmares, deal - making

“If I change, then will daddy come back”

“If I become a model child, then ...”

4. Depression

Hopelessness, powerlessness, sorrow, agony, slower thinking and actions, Have a strong urge to recover what was lost. Feeling of emptiness.

5. Acceptance

Finally accept the loss and everything that comes with it. Better appetite, increased energy and better concentration.

The teacher counsellor can use these stages together with the child during the counselling Sessions as the child moves along the grief process. The successful completion of these stages will depend on time, respect of the child’s situation by the counsellor, knowledge of the child’s home environment, the child’s willingness to cooperate, and the proper handling of counselling sessions by the counsellor (Worden 1996).

2.5.4 FOUR MAJOR TASKS TOWARDS ADJUSTMENT TO THE LOSS

It should be remembered that everyone might go through these stages, sometimes skipping some and even returning to some. Worden (1996) identified four major tasks that an individual must accomplish before successful adjustment to the loss occurs. Worden (1996), believed that the individual must:

- ❖ accept the reality of the loss.
- ❖ experience the pain of grief.
- ❖ adjust to an environment in which the deceased is missing.
- ❖ withdraw emotional energy and reinvest it in another relationship.

An individual experiencing an acute reaction might exhibit certain behaviours. Worden (1996) grouped them into four general categories:

- Feelings
- Physical sensations
- Cognition or thought processes
- Behaviours

One person, however, will experience not all of these behaviours. Worden (1996) pointed out that “It is important for bereavement counsellor to understand the wide range of behaviours covered under normal grief so they will not pathologise behaviour that should be recognized as normal.

Feelings

Sadness
 Guilt
 Relief
 Self rapprochement
 Anxiety, fatigue
 Anger, shock, loneliness

Physical Sensations

Hollowness in stomach
 Sensitivity to noise
 Tightness in the chest or throat
 Depersonalisation, shortness of breath
 Muscular weakness
 Lethargy
 Dry mouth

Behaviours

Crying
 Sleep disorder

Cognition/Thought Process

Disbelief
 Sense of presence

Absentminded

Dreams of the deceased

Restlessness

Appetite disturbances

Social withdrawal

Avoiding reminders of the deceased

Treasuring objects belonging to the deceased

Confusion

Hallucinations

Preoccupation

2.5.5 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

When the child seems to be over the worst and initial reactions to bereavement have subsided, there may be a period of disorganisation at school. The pupil may find it difficult to concentrate, seem aimless, not knowing how to set about tasks and have trouble finishing work. At this point, it is useful to find practical support such as helping the child to build lists of words / pictures of things they need to do during the school day or before bedtime for example. This gives the child something tangible to hold on to and refer to during this disorganised phase. Plenty of time for play and social interaction should be made available also, as a way of moving through this phase.

The child needs time to recover. We should accept that the emotional healing that the mourning process involves is crucial to the child's wellbeing as it is to adult. The grieving is much better carried out immediately after the event rather than being postponed. We should not sacrifice the child's grieving process with academic work. The student can undertake the educational tasks later when they can concentrate, but they may never regain full psychological well being if they cannot grieve successfully at their own pace especially if they cannot mourn directly at the time they need to mourn (Mallon, 1998).

If there are teachers in the school who have been trained in counselling and have the time and facilities to run bereavement group counselling activities for children who have suffered loss, excellent support work can take place. Such groups need to be well

organised and thought through, but in essence they offer a regular structured time for the same small group to share in confidence their thoughts and feelings about what happened to them. It gives them an opportunity to work through their grief in a safe place with an adult skilled in responding to all their emotions but who is distant enough from the family to keep some sort of perspective. Example of such environment is a PACT club (Peer Approach counselling by Teenagers). Here the children help each other. They share experiences and are free to express themselves. The counsellor only features when necessary, where he or she provides information and other relevant assistance.

One such group, described by (Masterman and Reams 1996, as cited by Mallon, 1998), report that the children who have taken part appear less constricted by their grief and less angry (Masterman and Ream 1986 referenced by Mallon, 1998). They are much more able to cope with the emotional reactions they have had and are continuing to experience. The parents of these participants reported that there were decreased behaviour difficulties at home and at school and there was increased communication with their children about their bereavement, which was previously avoided. Generally both parents and children found such peer groups beneficial.

2.5.6 INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Worden (1996) points out that research that has been conducted with bereaved children indicate that not all children need or would benefit from grief counselling. While some children would struggle with serious adjustment disorders after the loss, others merely struggle with adaptation to loss. The distinction between these two groups is blurred and careful considerations have to be made to identify what kind of treatment the child needs. If the pain is intense and longer the child has to be referred, as this will be a sign of adjustment disorder

Rando (1984) and Worden (1996) suggest the following as helpful to children for general adaptation after loss:

Sufficient information

There is need to give children clear and comprehensive information after death. Children's understanding of death differs depending on age and experience. Lack of information can make the child feel less important and anxious. They might even feel responsible for what happened. If provided with information, it would help them fill in the gaps and alleviate their fears

Address fears and anxieties

In case of death of a parent, children need to be reassured that they will be cared for. They might also fear that the surviving parent might also die. Another fear that they might have is their own safety. These fears need to be addressed by those attending to the needs of the children and appropriate reassurance given.

Validation of individual's feelings

After the loss, children go through different emotions that can confuse them. It would be helpful to them if those feelings are acknowledged and respected as valid. Given that each child has a unique personality and different nature of relationship with the deceased, they will express their thoughts and feelings in their own way, at their own 'schedule'. Some children are more open with thoughts and feelings, while others disclose less. This does not make them care less of the deceased. Parents need to be helped to understand this.

Involvement and Inclusion (Refer also page 23: the child and the funeral)

Young children are usually not involved in the planning of the funeral, attending the wake and funeral. This can make them feel less important. Parents usually 'protect' the children by not involving them and also making decisions for them. Children need to be involved in the decision making process, unless they are very young. Staudacher (1987)

has shown that involvement and inclusion are helpful to the adjustment of children following loss.

Opportunity to remember

Children need to be able to remember and memorialise the deceased, not only after death but continuously, as they go through the remaining stages of life

Pictures and some objects belonging to the deceased can only be useful reminders of what the person was and things that were important in their relationship. If it is comfortable to the family, shared reminiscences in the family can be helpful.

Children who show specific behavioural signs - **red flag** - should be referred for professional evaluation and possibly treatment (Standacher 1987).

Multiple Strategies

Art, music, play, dance, books, story telling, emotions, the use of video and audio technology can all be put to service to assist grieving children and adolescents. They can be used in varied settings - counselling offices, centres, schools or even camps designed for grieving youth. They can be usefully employed with individuals or groups (Staudacher 1987)

Intervention Strategy

The term means that Counsellors are clear about what they hope to accomplish in their use of a strategy and then tailor that strategy to the needs and interests of clients.

As each child is different, intervention strategies should be designed with the individual's preference in mind.

2.5.7 TREATMENT INTERVENTIONS

In general, treatment interventions used to assist the bereaved adults are equally effective in assisting the bereaved children when age appropriate considerations are taken into account (Rando, 1984).

Individual Counselling

Individual counselling is helpful to bereaved children in several ways. It would help children experiencing complicated bereavement (e.g. social withdrawal, sleep disorder and hallucination) resulting in serious behaviour and emotional disturbances. Such children are not well suited for group intervention. Individual counselling offers the bereaved child an environment of emotional security and stability at a time when it may be difficult for the surviving parents and other family members to provide these conditions. Any environment that allows the child to freely express her/his feelings and to share these pains with someone may help the child to sustain the process of mourning when it would be otherwise disturbed. Individual counselling provides the child with supportive adult relationship. A stable relationship between a child and any significant adult figure is related to greater resilience and better social adjustment in bereaved children.

Group Counselling

Group counselling for bereaved children can be effective intervention models for a number of reasons. They provide a safe and supportive environment for children to express feelings without worrying about the presence of other family members. Children also have the advantage of getting support and feedback from their peers. Contact with other bereaved children gives the child the reassurance that they are not alone in the experience of loss. Group interventions provide a place for the child to learn about death as well as a place to confront faulty beliefs about loss. Groups are also time and cost effective and can be easily adapted to school settings (Holland, 1993).

Family Counselling

Family counselling is designed to give bereaved children an opportunity to work through their grief within the context of the family. Family members talk together about the death and readjust the family as a system after the loss. Family counselling may focus on

communication, family readjustment, and problem solving and dealing with practical issues of family life after death. The school counsellor may be present through the permission of the bereaved family. This gathering will provide the school counsellor with an understanding of the family ecosystem and background, hence helps the school to offer the bereaved a relevant help.

2.5.8 INTERVENTION ACTIVITIES

Specific intervention activities can be selected, as relevant to the age and the needs of the children, and used in individual, group or family counselling. The following activities are those suggested by Worden (1996); Smith and Pennells (1995); Webb (1993) and Palmatier (1998):

Self Expression / writing activities

Various needs of bereaved children can be facilitated through writing activities. Examples of writing activities are:

Journaling - The child is encouraged to write down their feelings, thoughts and questions about the deceased. This writings will depend on how expressive the children are in their writings. They can also be encouraged to write down dreams, especially those involving the deceased. If a child enjoys writing poems, he/she can be encouraged to write poems.

Letters - Writing letters must be used discretely to avoid confusing the children. In this activity the children are encouraged to write letters to the deceased. Content of the letters could include statements of caring or asking for forgiveness, for something done or not done or said before death. It would be more effective to encourage children to write the letters in the present tense.

Memory book - Memory book is a scrapbook of memories about the deceased. Children would be encouraged to place pictures, stories they have written and photographs they

have selected. Children may include things they did with the deceased or things they would like to remember about them.

Therapeutic Play

Art activities

Art activities are especially appropriate for children at early ages. They help children express their pain in measured amounts and attend to one aspect of death at a time. Some art activities could include drawing, puppet activities and clay moulding.

Games

Children can play games like football, netball, softball monopoly, drama, music etc. Games help children to actively participate in the group and they normalise the discussion of death. Children also learn new ways of coping and relating with others.

Storytelling

Appropriate stories about death can be read to children and discussed individually or in groups. Children can tell how the stories made them feel or say how the bereaved character in the story must have been feeling. Children can also be encouraged to write stories about how they feel and share them with other group members.

Film and video

There are a number of films and videos for various ages that approach the topic of death and dying both directly and indirectly. It is important to process the film/video after watching. In addition, counsellors can make up their own activities to meet the needs of grieving children.

Some possible intervention activities that could be created within the school:

- Fund raising through contribution by school and the community.
- Extra lessons should be given to the bereaved learners to cover for the missed ones.
- Attendance of the vigil prayers and funeral by school community should be done.
- Structured counselling programme for the bereaved is necessary.
- Infusing bereavement intervention strategies in the school curriculum.

2.5.9 THE ROLE OF SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN STUDENTS' BEREAVEMENT

Having a key figure within each school has been highlighted as an important move towards addressing these issues. Specialist training in First Aid for one individual is required by law in all schools (Crossley 1995, cited in Reid, 2001)). It could be argued that specialist training in bereavement is also a necessity. This Specialist training in bereavement, for one named person in the school, would establish a foundation of support and advice for others. The specialist Education Needs Coordinator would be the most likely candidate for such a post. The Special Educational Needs Coordinator can work with Child and Mental Health Support (CAMHS), Educational Psychology Service (EPS) and Emotional and behavioural support (EBS) as the foundation of networked system (Crossley (1995, referenced by Reid, 2001).

The Special Educational Needs Coordinator should be a member of the School Senior Management team as this would re-emphasise the school leadership commitment to the support for the emotional alongside the intellectual. Indeed, recent literature on emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995, cited in Reid, 2001) would arguably demonstrate that the two are inseparable.

The prioritising of support structures inevitably has to compete for time and money with many other responsibility areas in the school. However, successes of positive provision do not always develop as the consequence of large financial resources. Sometimes they are the result of the skills, enthusiasm and intrinsic knowledge and empathies of core individuals, for example: counselling skills, willingness, motivation and considerations are the key factors necessary for established bereavement strategies in the learning institution. Without these aspects, money alone will not work.

Arguments about financial issues will always exist, but where these issues are allowed to create barriers against the care of our children, future progress will be inhibited (Reid, 2001). Support programmes have been built not through finance, but by adults that care (Brown 1997). These individuals often prove to be those who have experienced grief

themselves and who have turned these life experiences into a positive force. They have internalised a knowledge of loss that enables them to empathise and communicate effectively with others experiencing bereavement. If they are successful managers, they have interpersonal and organisational skills, which enable them to be responsive to needs and demands within the school and its local community,(Cole citing Brown, 1997).

In conclusion, the educational leadership of a school is responsible for an eco-system that permeates every aspect of a child's experience within that school. The experience of bereavement extends far beyond the school gates, so the eco-system must link the school to the child's whole community. Managers are crucial in creating the training opportunities, sense of priority, and atmosphere of support, care for cares, time and money resources where necessary, and in offering leadership and example in the personal qualities needed in and beyond the school. The school managers could organise a bereavement school based workshop to sensitise and equip teachers with bereavement skills. This is a typical example through which the School Managers could use their influence

The attendants of the workshop should include both teaching and non-teaching staff, students' representatives, parents that are part of Parents and Teachers Association Executive Committee and other stakeholders. In order to provide this, managers and teachers need in their initial and continuing training to visit and revisit the research on motivation, emotional intelligence, transference and the bereavement process (Reid 2001). Apart from the workshop, the school may train one or two teachers to handle bereavement issues. Fund raising activities could be conducted to raise money for the bereaved, assembly presentations should be conducted to talk about life skills and how to cope with the death of a relative, the school should have bereavement policy, annual memorial service for all students who are lost relatives in that year.

An Educational management team that has established an ethos of care within their school is proactive in safeguarding the individual carer (Brown, 1999). Educational management teams must question the priority given to intellectual learning above

emotional learning (Greenhalgh, 1997). Educational research has repeatedly emphasised emotional stability to be a pre-requisite for learning (Maslow, 1954). If educators and managers cannot accept responsibility for emotional issues, then subsequent learning cannot take place, and recovery is delayed (Reid, 2002).

2.6 CONCLUSION

One of the biggest challenges that we are faced with is dealing with the death of someone we know. That in it may prove to be the most difficult and stressful event children will come face to face with throughout lifetime. In fact it may be a situation in which learners' minds, bodies, and souls will be put through the test of enduring pain, loneliness, and grief as a result of having lost someone close to their hearts. Children have to deeply search deep within themselves in order to be able to survive and go their with our lives.

This is especially true when children are involved. Whether we as parents and teachers want to be or not, we are their role models. It is our example that they will follow. If we are comfortable with our feelings and we are not afraid to show our emotions and our grief then our learners will more likely to do the same. If we are not able to deal with situation or answer their questions honestly, they may not be able to accomplish the necessary tasks that are a vital part of the grieving process. It is up to us to identify issues that may be making it difficult for children and adolescents to deal with the death

Fox (reference by Eyetsemitan, 2002)

Seeking help from other sources e.g. schools, camps, religious groups and community organizations that are prepared and trained to assist the grieving child, may become necessary. Maintaining open lines of communication and answering our children's questions about death and dying as thoroughly and consistently as possible is of vital importance. For when we become comfortable with our own mortality, then we can become instrumental in helping our children grow and develop the skills they need to cope with the realities of life.

It is believed that the timing of children's grief reactions will often follow closely on the timing of their parents grieving (Baker & Furman 1974, referenced by Kuenning, 1987), pointed out that the grief process in children is heavily dependent on the support of the teachers and parents. It is imperative that this adult parental support be constant, for any interruption may cause the grief process to be suspended during the time that support is not available. This may prevent the child from processing into the later tasks of the grief process.

Death is a traumatic experience to children and adults alike. But given that the children do not have the experience, understanding and general coping mechanisms like adults, they need more help than adults to deal with the grief. The loss of a loved one is a tragedy unequalled by any other for most bereaved people. For every death, bereaved persons are left behind parent, spouses, children, siblings, friends or teachers all of who are at high risk of detrimental effects on their mental and physical health (Stroebe and Hansson 1993). For example the class teacher will not effectively execute his/her teaching roles when the very children are mourning the death of their colleague's relative. Equally the school management will find it hard to monitor and administer the emotionally destabilised staff and children.

Schools should be a major source of support in offering routine, predictability and a different environment for a child who has had the world of home knocked from under his feet. The school may be considered the child's first line of defence, the teachers his closest allies. Schools must be prepared for the fact that some children will not be able to face returning to school following bereavement. They may not feel equal to the task of learning and may either opt out or, if they do arrive they may be a disturbing influence (crying, absent minded, social withdrawal, low level of concentration or attention deficit). Truancy and disruptive behaviour are both cries for help, expressing a longing for the security of an unbroken home (Wynne Jones 1997). School life goes some way to supplying those needs, especially where teachers are alert to uncharacteristic behaviour and its reasons. Punishment is not the answer, but while discipline must be maintained, it must be tempered by insight and understanding

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter addresses the specific methods used in this research, the rationale underlying their use and the steps taken to ensure the validity of the information obtained.

The qualitative research approach will be used in this study. This method will be preceded by survey, which will necessitate observations during funerals in the communities served by the school samples in the research project. The research will involve the administration of a questionnaire and an interview to a sample of respondents especially those who cannot read and write.

The qualitative researcher works through collection of extensive amount of both observational and verbal data from a small number of participants (Walsh, 2001). The qualitative research approach is therefore adopted for the purpose of this study due to its flexibility and its combinations of participants' observation, interviews and artifact collection. With this type of approach, the subjects' perspectives are studied with interactive strategies such as ethnographic interview, observations as well as the inclusion of non – interactive strategies such as the study of documentations Macmillan and Schumacher (1993).

3.2 POPULATION

The study will be carried out in five senior secondary schools located in the south east of Botswana. The total number of senior secondary schools in this area is seven (source: department of secondary, Gaborone). The rationale behind choosing these schools was due to their proximity to each other and to my duty station. The schools are administered by the South Education Region Head office in Kanye, hence the sample schools that this study will work with is the five secondary schools randomly selected. This administration center will assist in my study especially when I need any information about the sampled schools. The Education centre will also avail internet resource at no cost.

There are seven Senior Secondary Schools in the south east of Botswana and five of these schools will be used as sample. The schools are Moshupa Secondary School located 25 kilometres north of Kanye. Seepapitso Secondary School is in Kanye. Lobatse Secondary School is forth five kilometers east of Kanye. Moeding College is located north east of Kanye (75 km) and Kagiso Secondary School in Ramotswa which is 100 km north east of Kanye. The population of students in the sampled schools is as followed: Moshupa school is about 1300, Seepapitso Secondary (Kanye) school is 1915, Lobatse Secondary school is 1300, Kagiso Secondary School (Ramotswa) is 1300 and Moeding College has students population of 1300 respectively.

The five schools admit students from the surrounding villages who have passed their junior secondary education examinations. The population of teachers in these schools ranges from 80 to 100 depending on the population of the students. The parents of these students stay at their respective villages and towns and usually come to school when called for parents' consultations or when they have come to collect their children's reports. These are public state schools.

Each school has a school head, a team of staff members, including senior teachers and students. There also Parents and Teachers Association (PTA), which plays a significant role in the running of the school. The Government of Botswana has recently (January,

2006) introduced a double shift system with the aim of increasing the number of students admitted at public senior secondary schools from junior schools hence the introduction of double shift.

There are two groups of students, which are Form four students (who have just finished their three-year junior secondary education and have passed their junior education examinations with grade A, B or better grade C. The other group is form five students. Students in the latter group are in their last year in O'level and will sit for the O'level examination at the end of the year. In each of the five schools except Seepapitso School, there are 1200 students. Seepapitso secondary school happens to be amongst the double shift pilot schools in the country hence higher population. The total population of Seepapitso secondary school is 1915 students.

There are morning classes and afternoon classes. The schools knock off at 1600 Hours while Seepapitso secondary school dismisses pupils at 1800 hours due to the double shift program. There are 20 classes in each form (form 4 and form 5). Each class has 30 students and a class teacher. Each school has a senior teacher Guidance and Counseling and twenty-five school management team members. Due to the piloted double shift program Seepapitso school has 1200 Form four students. Half of this number (600) comes to school during the morning shift and the other half is for the afternoon shift). The remaining 600 students are form five who also form the morning shift.

Table 1 shows the population of the sampled secondary schools under study

Schools	Students	Teachers	School Heads	School Management Team	Parent & Teacher Association (PTA): Parents=4 Teachers=4
Seepapitso Sch	1800	80	1	30	8
Lobatse School	1200	70	1	25	8
Moshupa School	1200	70	1	25	8
Kagiso School	1200	70	1	25	8
Moeding College	1200	70	1	25	8
Total 7115	6600	360	5	130	40 teachers=20 parents=20

3.3 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE (Simple Random Sampling)

Simple Random Sampling technique shall be employed to select the population sample to participate in the study. This technique is applicable in which all the individuals in the defined population have an equal and independent chance of being selected as a member of the sample Lowry (1979). By “independent” means that the selection of one individual does not affect in any way the selection of any other individual Lowry (1979).

Each member in each category (students, School Heads, Guidance teachers, Class teachers and PTA Executive members) has an equal chance of being selected. This sampling technique involves selecting at random from a list of the population (a sampling

frame) the required number of students for the sample. One of the advantages of this technique is that the sample contains subjects with characteristics similar to the population as a whole. The main purpose for using the random sampling technique is that random samples yield research data that can be generalized to a larger population within margins of error.

3.4 SAMPLE SIZE

With reference to the sample size, there is no clear-cut answer, for the correct sample size depends upon the purpose of the study, the resources available and the nature of the population under scrutiny (Cohen and Manion, 1996). The heterogeneity of the target population is very important in deciding sample size. The greater the heterogeneity, the larger the sample required to represent the population, so maintains Chadwick (1984) referenced by Cohen and Manion (1996). In this investigation, the sample population is as follows:

Table 2 showing sample population of the selected subjects

Schools	Classes of Form five	Class Teacher	School Head/ Deputy	Guidance Teachers: 1/school	HOD (5/school)	PTA (parents only)
Kanye (Seepapitso Sch)	3x 30= 90	3	1	1	2	4
Lobatse School	2x30=60	2	1	1	2	4
Moshupa School	2x30=60	2	1	1	2	4
Ramotswa (Kagiso School)	2x30=60	2	1	1	2	4
Otse Moeding College	2x30=60	2	1	1	2	4
TOTAL= 381	330	11	5	5	10	20

Sample population: $381/7115 \times 100 = 5.35\%$

The Significant roles played by the chosen participants

Class teachers of the chosen Form Five class will be used in the study because they spend most of the time with the pupils and are normally the first to identify problems associated with students, may it be social, emotional, education or personal. The class teachers should care deeply about their students,(Farrant,1980:213). Traditionally, parents entrust their children to the teacher for him/her to look after on their behalf. The teacher acts as a liaison between the child and his peers, and between the child's teacher and his parents. The child 's welfare is concerned with several aspects like physical well being, emotional well being, moral and spiritual well being (Farrant, 1980:213).

Teacher Counselors will be included in the study because dealing with the specific grief reactions of students falls often under their jurisdictions. School counselors often have to spend a great deal of time with scheduling and school counseling. The teacher counselor's task requires that he/she gain the child's confidence so that the child may share his/her problems with him/her (Farrant, 1980; 214).

School heads and Heads of departments are part of the study because they are the implementers of government policies and overseers of the school daily activities. They are the mediators between the parents and students. The school leadership liaises with the Ministry of Education, Social Service Agencies, Faith communities and Business people. The school administrators ensure that there is an integrated and complete response when tragedies occur in school (Peterson, 1992 cited in Farrant, 1980).

Students: In the interactions with each other, students get to know each other's circumstances very well. They are therefore best included in the study to assist, counsel and refer other students to the school counselor or school administration (Botswana Ministry of Education 2006). The success of this encourages students making these

referrals in a responsible, sensitive and confidential manner. The students will form the bulk of the participants as the study centers around them.

Parents.

Parents teach the children norms and societal expectations. They play significant pivotal roles in nurturing and monitoring the physical, social and emotional development of the child. The child grows into what he/she has been groomed to become by the parents. The parents provide the basic needs of the child. The parents determine the destiny of the child at home hence is included in the study.

3.5 LEARNER SAMPLE

There are two sets of groups of learners, which are the Form Four and Form Five students. The form five students will be sampled in this study. Out of the twenty classes, two classes each with 30 students will be part of the sample group, ($30 \times 2 = 60$ students). This formula will be used for the four schools. For Seepapitso Secondary School the formula will be ($30 \times 3 = 90$ Students). This is so because the population of the latter school is relatively higher. All together there are five schools.

Moshupa Secondary School:	$30 \times 2 = 60$ Students
Lobatse Secondary School:	$30 \times 2 = 60$ Students
Moeding College:	$30 \times 2 = 60$ Students
Kagiso Secondary School:	$30 \times 2 = 60$ Students
Seepapitso Secondary School:	$30 \times 3 = 90$ Students
Total	330 Students
Percentage	$330/6600 \times 100 = 5\%$

These learners have been in school for a longer time relatively and could have experienced traumatic loss (death) of the significant relative hence they are also the right

participants to ask about how the curriculum content deals with death related issues as far as bereavement intervention strategies is concerned.

3.5.1 CLASS TEACHERS

Class teachers have spent much of the time with sampled pupils. Each class has a class teacher which will form part of the sample size. Two classes from each of the four schools and three classes from Seepapitso will be used (because it has a higher population).

2 Classes: 2 Class Teachers (each of the four Secondary schools)

3 Classes: 3 Class teachers (Seepapitso Secondary School).

3.5.2 SCHOOL HEADS/ DEPUTIES

A school Principal who is assisted by the deputy Principal heads the school. They would be instances when the Principal is not present in school his /her Deputy will be asked to respond to the questionnaire.

5 Schools: 5 Principals

3.5.3 HEAD OF DEPARTMENTS (HOD)

There are five Heads of Departments in each sampled school and two of them in each school will be used ($\frac{2}{5} \times 100/1 = .40\%$) of the total number of the HOD in each school. The confidence level of 0.05 or 5% is generally accepted in statistical analysis to reject null hypothesis. This makes 2 HOD x 5 Schools = 10 Heads of Department. The Heads of Departments will be selected randomly

3.5.4 SENIOR TEACHER GUIDANCE & COUNSELLING

Each of the five schools has a senior guidance and counseling teacher. Hence there will be 5 (five) guidance and counseling teachers who will form this sample.

3.5.5 PARENTS AND TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (PTA)

This sample group constitutes both teachers and Parents. The researcher will only use the parents in the executive committee but not the teachers, because teachers have already been used as part of the class- teachers and Heads of departments samples. The assumption is that PTA executive committee members will represent the rest of the parents. There are eight (8) PTA members in the committee (parents=4 Teachers=4) and only four (4) parents in each school will be used).

Parents x 5 Schools = 20 PTA members

3.6 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Two research instruments shall be employed to gather data. These are the questionnaire and interview.

3.6.1 QUESTIONNAIRE

For many good reasons the questionnaire is the most widely used technique for obtaining information from subjects Schumacher and McMillan (1993). A questionnaire is relatively economical, has standardized questions, can ensure anonymity, and questions can be written for specific purpose Johnson (1991, referenced in Schumacher and Mc Millan 1993). Questionnaires can use statements or questions, but in all cases the subject is responding to something written (Schumacher and McMillan, 1993)

If well constructed, a questionnaire permits the collection of reliable and reasonably valid data relatively simply, cheaply and in a short space of time (Anderson 1997). The questionnaire as a research instrument is used to collect relatively routine data from a large number of respondents in one or number of locations such as schools (Anderson 1997).

3.6.2 INTERVIEW

This interview instrument will be used on the parents sample in this study. (See Appendix F on page 159). The interview is a face-to-face interpersonal role situation in which one person (the interviewer) asks a person being interviewed (the respondent) questions designed to obtain answer pertinent to the research problem Kerlinger and Lee (1993, referenced by Cohen and Manion, 1994). In other instances the interview can be less formal where the interviewer is free to modify the sequence of questions, change the wording, explain them or add to them (Cohen and Manion (1994)).

Interview as an instrument can obtain a great deal of information when used with a well conceived schedule. It is flexible and adaptable to individual situations. The instrument is advantageous in the sense that an interviewer can know whether the respondent, especially a child, does not understand a question and can, within limits repeat or rephrase the question Kerlinger and Lee (1993, cited in Cohen and Manion, 1994)).

The interview are designed for the parents sample in this study to accommodate those parents who may not be sufficiently capacitated to engage with Questionnaire instrument content (See appendix F on page 159).

Validity and Reliability of interview instrument

In an interpersonal encounter people are more likely to disclose aspects of themselves, their thoughts, their feeling and values than they would in a less human situation (Cohen and Manion, 1996). The responses of the parents will probably be valid and reliable because these parents live in the same geographical location (same district), and they

interact on daily basis as they carry their social, economic and political activities. Their feelings and their thoughts would be influenced by their daily experiences in their locality, hence are likely to give similar responses time and again (reliability) using the same instrument (validity).

Types of questionnaire to use

Likert Scale Questionnaire

The participants will be given Likert scale question forms. This is one of the most useful forms of questions. In its most popular format the respondents are presented with a sentence and are asked to agree or disagree on a three, five or seven- point scale. A clear statement will be made and the respondents are asked to indicate, whether the statement reflects their views. For example: Death and Bereavement topics should be included in Botswana secondary school curriculum.

**Yes ___ , No ___ , Sometimes ___ , Strongly Agree ___ Strongly Disagree ___
Agree ___ Disagree ___ Sometimes**

NOTE: (STRONGLY DISAGREE and DISAGREE columns are always merged so are the columns are on AGREE and STRONGLY AGREE)

Comment on Items

Some of the question items will require the respondents to comment on the given question. This type of question attempts to elicit extensive comments.

3.6.3 DATA COLLECTION

The researcher will conduct the necessary interviews and administer the questionnaires personally. The interviews are designed for the parents sample to accommodate those parents who are incapacitated to engage with the questionnaire instrument (eg parents who are semi literate) the questionnaires will be delivered to the five schools. At schools

the questionnaires will be given to the teacher counselors who will distribute them to the concerned subjects.

Six set of questionnaires will be prepared for respondents each set of respondents tackling their relevant questions for example Principals, Students or class teachers respectively will have their own sets of questions. The senior teacher counselors will monitor the completion of the questionnaires except for parents. The parents' interview instrument will be attended to during the Parents and Teachers Association meeting. Those parents will form part of the sample who will not be reached during these meetings will be visited at their homes

3.6.4 PERMISSION LETTER

A letter of introduction will be obtained from my supervisor. The essence of this letter is to stipulate the purpose of the research. It is also a means of conveying to the respondents the importance of the study and to assure them confidentiality. Permission letter to allow the children to participate in the study will be requested from the students' parents (Parents and Teachers Association Executive Committee Members). Another permission letter will be obtained from the Education Region Head quarters to be allowed to carry the study in the schools.

3.6.5 FOLLOW UPS

Follow ups will be made to those who will not respond on time and for those who would have misplaced the questionnaires will be given the second questionnaires.

3.6.6 SOURCES OF DATA

Both the primary and secondary sources shall be used to gather information. Primary source is based on the first hand account and original research information that is directly obtained by the researcher. This information will be obtained directly from the

respondents such as class teachers, students themselves, the school counselors and other participants. The secondary sources are those that already exist on the topic. This information shall be obtained from the literature materials, magazines, educational journals, journal of psychology, Internet, statistics on the topic etc.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

4.1A SAMPLED SCHOOLS: CODE 4A

There are twenty four Senior Secondary Schools in Botswana. Twelve of these schools are in the northern part of Botswana and twelve of them are in the south of the country. Of the twelve schools in the south, seven of them are in the south –east and out of the seven secondary schools in the south east, five of them are under study.

- i) Moshupa Secondary school (Moshupa)
- ii) Lobatse Secondary School (Lobatse)
- iii) Seepapitso Secondary School (Kanye)
- iv) Moeding College (Otse)
- v) Kagiso Secondary School (Ramotswa)

(Refer to permission memoranda (Appendix 7 and 8) to use the names of these schools)

4.2A GENDER

The students sample is made up of both boys and girls. The students were randomly selected.

Note: There were three hundred and thirty students who were expected to participate but only three hundred and ten students (94%) took part. The 6% return deficit emanated from some dodging lessons, others serving punishment, while others being absent in schools during the time when the questionnaire were answered.

4.3A

Form five classes

Form five students were chosen to participate in the study because they had been in school for longer period than other students. A Form five learner takes two years to complete

his/her O'level education, this means this learner has a year longer in school than a form four student. This senior learner has gone through various curriculum subjects taught in the sampled schools hence are in a better position to evaluate the contents of bereavement section of school curriculum in relation to bereavement intervention strategies in place.

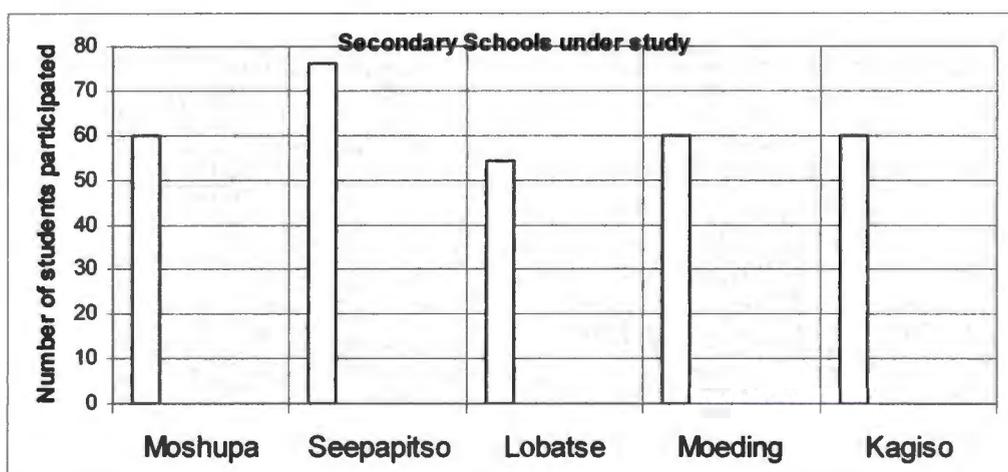


Figure 1 Number of students per sampled schools

NOTE: In analyzing sections with numerical data/inputs, some quantitative directive/terminology will be used e.g. when a significant number of respondents, though lower than the number of respondents to the same Question, is viewed as essential to note

4.3.1A

The subsequent section will deal with the responses of the students to the various study questions. The questions are in two parts: Question 1-14 requests the students to choose from the given alternatives as written below:

- (i) **Yes** (ii) **No** (iii) **Always (Al)** (iv) **Sometimes (St)**

The students were to make a cross (x) or tick (✓) for their chosen alternatives. Question fifteen wants the students to state their opinions. This question will give the students a chance to open up and come up with spectrum of answers unlike question 1-14 where the answers are readily given.

Questions and Statement

4.4A

Have you lost a parent or a close relative since attending at this school?

Students were to either say **Yes** or **No** to the statement. Thirty three percent (102 students out of 310 students) agreed with the statement. On the other hand sixty seven percent (208 students) disagreed with the statement. This shows that majority of students have not directly experienced death of a parent or close relative during their secondary school days. However, a thirty three percent (102) respondent is significant.

4.5A

I have seen someone receiving help from school after the death of parent or relative.

Twenty seven percent (84 participants out 310 learners) indicated that they have seen bereaved learners receiving bereavement assistance of some sort from the school. Twelve percent (37 students) indicate that the assistance is sometimes given. This response indicates that the assistance mentioned is not regular or consistent, as it is sometimes not offered to the bereaved. Sixty one percent (189) of students have indicated that such help does not exist. This means generally students are not adequately given support they normally desperately need when death has befallen their families.

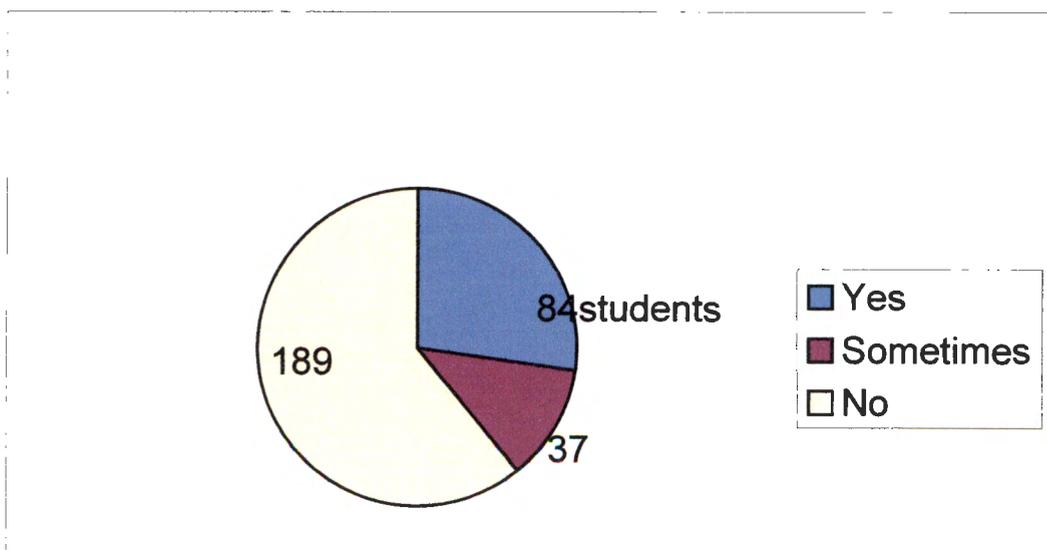


Figure 2: Have received/seen someone receiving bereavement assistance

With reference to the results tabulated on table 3 below, the results show that (176 students of the 310), fifty-seven percent of the respondents said they had not witnessed financial condolences offered to the bereaved students (ref 4. 6.1a). Forty three percent (134 learners) have witnessed such kind of financial help. The results on 4.6.2 in table 3 shows that schools do not issue school furniture to the bereaved students' families regularly as indicated by (208) learners (sixty seven percent). Fifty five percent (172 learners) had refuted that memorial services are usually held in their schools (ref: 4.6.3a). One hundred and thirty eight students (forty five percent) responded affirmatively toward sub-question .

the One hundred and forty seven learners (forty seven percent) have indicated that the school sometimes offers transport to assist at the home of the bereaved. One hundred and four learners (thirty four percent) of students do not agree with the existence of such arrangement (4.6.4a). If the two figures ('Yes' figures =19% and 'Sometimes'=47%) the total figure (66%) shows that students are assisted with transport though the help is unreliable. The thirty four percent of students who denied the existence of such provision could be the learners who had not indeed seen or heard about the assistance.

In reference to statement (4. 6.5a), Thirty two percent (100 students) have revealed that both teachers and students attend the funeral while forty seven (147 students) have the opposite view. However, that thirty two is a significant number. With regard to the subsequent question (4.6.6a), forty nine percent of these learners agreed with the fact that there is always a spokesperson for the school at the funeral of the student's family. Seventy four students (twenty four percent) indicated that the spokes person is sometimes sent. Twenty seven percent (84 learners) denied the existence of such practice. The general conclusion of the responses is that the schools normally send the representatives as spokes persons at the funeral service of the students' significant one.

4.6A

Below is some of the assistance I have seen given to those who lost parents or relatives in school .

Table 3 Responses of students to various questions concerning bereavement assistance

QUES No	Statement	Agree/Yes/ Always	Disagree/ No	Sometimes
4.6.1A	Condolences in the form of money.	134 (43%)	176 (57%)	0 (0%)
4.6.2A	Being provided with school furniture like chairs, tables, cooking utensils etc to use in preparations.	105 (43%)	208 (67%)	0 (0%)
4.6.3A	Memorial services are held to remember the deceased student at school.	138 (45%)	172 (55%)	0 (0%)
4.6.4A	School transport is offered to the bereaved Family.	60 (19%)	104 (34%)	146 (47%)
4.6.5A	Students and teachers attended the funeral Services.	100 (32%)	147 (47%)	63 (21%)
4.6.6A	School usually sends a spokesperson to speak at the funeral.	152 (49)	84 (27)	74 (24)
4.6.7A	Counseling services were given to the bereaved students.	183 (59%)	127 (41%)	0 (0%)
4.6.8A	Extra lessons are given to the bereaved student after the funeral of the significant one (because the student has been absent from school for some days to attend the funeral.	31 (10%)	232 (75%)	47 (15%)
4.6.9A	Students are usually given opportunity to sing at the funeral service.	155 (50%)	75 (24%)	80 (26%)

Responding to sub-question (4.6.7a), (183 learners) fifty nine percent of the three hundred and ten students agreed that counseling service is normally offered to the bereaved students while forty one percent denied that. This indicates that students are generally given counseling services to help them accept the reality of death, but this practice is not visible enough to be noted by a significant number (127 learners) which is forty one percent.

With reference to question (4. 6.8a), the Majority of the students (233) seventy five percent of respondents do not agree that extra academic lessons are given to the pupils after the funeral of the bereaved' parents. If what the students are saying reflects what actually happens in schools, it means many of the bereaved learners are not given support and assistance to cover up for the missed school time.

In responding to statement 4.6.9a, fifty percent (155 students) have indicated that students are usually given the opportunity to sing at the funeral service. On the other hand twenty four percent of the students disagreed with the statement. Twenty percent (80 students) indicated that this opportunity is sometimes given to the students. The results have shown that the students are accorded the opportunity to sing as a way of participating in the funeral service as missed school time. The students who are not when they return from the funeral will probably not perform well academically as they have not learned some materials due to the death of their relatives. These learners will probably have two problems of accumulated academic assignments and the emotional stress of their lost significant one.

well as a way of bidding their colleagues a fare well. This participation is considered a valuable ritual in helping the bereaved adjust to the loss of a loved one (Klicker, 1997).

EDUCATIONAL ISSUES:

4.7.1a Has the topic of death and bereavement been included in your learning subjects?

Thirty percent (93 learners) agreed with the above statement. Two hundred and seventeen students (seventy percent) disagreed with the statement. This overwhelming results

indicate that the topic of death, bereavement, grief and other related information about mourning is neither covered in details in the syllabi nor disseminated to the students efficiently to effectively prepare students for the after death events. The thirty percent(93 learners) of those who supported the statement may be confirming that there are some topics covering information about death but not adequately for example Setswana as a subject in secondary schools explains the cultural significance and value of funeral rituals (past and present) and the traditional roles that individuals play in the process.

Religious Education syllabi cover topics related to the 'rites of passage' on death, rituals associated with death in different religions such as: Botswana traditional religion, Sikhism, Shintoism, Hinduism and Islam. Botswana Ministry of Education: (Setswana, Religious Education, 1995). Moral Education also covers some aspects of death and bereavement especially when it explains the effects of death on the bereaved and society. Nonetheless, the Ministry of education in Botswana might have to consider intensifying the inclusion of death education in the school curriculum.

4.7.2a Is the topic of death discussed sufficiently or adequately in different subjects?

Thirty five percent of students (109) supported the statement while (202 learners) sixty five percent indicated that the topic of death is not discussed adequately in different subjects. The Ministry of Education might have to consider intensifying the inclusion of the death topic in the curriculum.

4.7.3a The topic of death should be taught in all the subjects in the public schools?

The students were to respond by either **yes** or **no**. In responding to the above statement, fifty five percent (170) of the students agreed with the statement. Forty five percent did not agree with the teaching of death in schools. From these responses it can be concluded that good number of students (55%) appreciate and regard the death topic as essential in the school curriculum. Although the number of the students who disagreed with the idea

of teaching death is less than those who are for the idea of death topic the (45%) is still a significant number.

4.8a

How do the students and classmates help the bereaved child before and after the funeral?

Table4: How the learners help the bereaved classmates/students

Question NO	Statements	SA	A	D	SD
4.8.1a	They give moral support	86 (28%)	162 (52%)	41 (13%)	21 (7%)
4.8.2a	They give no support	19 (6%)	25 (8%)	107 (35%)	159 (51%)
4.8.3a	They give social support	50 (16%)	150 (48%)	75 (24%)	35 (12%)
4.8.4a	They give academic support	47 (15%)	89 (29%)	80 (26%)	94 (30%)

4.8.1a

Twenty eight percent (86 students) strongly agreed while fifty two percent agreed with the statement. This makes eighty percent (248 students) agreeing with the statement. The remaining twenty percent disagreed with the statement. These responses reflected that generally other students in school morally support the bereaved students during the traumatic times.

4.8.2a

This statement was the inverse of the previous question, which still reflects almost the same responses as the previous one. Eighty six percent (267 students) disagree with the statement and forty four percent (136 pupils) agreed with the statement. These results show that many students still appreciate and acknowledge the help given by the student community toward the bereaved.

4.8.3a

Sixty four percent (198 students) agreed that student community in schools offers social support. Thirty six percent (112 students) disagree. This generally indicates that students in schools do support those who are bereaved.

4.8.4a The responses to this statement (4.8.4a) indicate that forty four percent of the participants (47+ 89=136 students made by the two affirmative groups) have shown that they agree with the fact that academic support is offered to the bereaved students. Fifty six percent of the respondents (80+94=174 made by those who disagreed) have shown that there is no academic support given by the schools. These responses indicate that schools are not doing enough to provide academic support to those who have lost their significant ones. This response can be linked to the responses given in the previous statement 4.6.8 which clearly show that academic support is not adequately given to the bereaved learners in schools. These results can be linked to 4.6.8a.

How should your school assist the entire student population to understand and accept the occurrences of death?

Question	Statements	S/A	A	D	SD
4.9.1a	Discuss death and its effects in class		223 (72%)	87 (28%)	
4.9.2a	Invite religious leaders & other professional to school to address students on death and related issues	82 (26%)	135 (44%)	49 (16%)	44 (14%)
4.9.3a	Allow students to see the corps of the deceased at the funeral service		179 (58%)	131 (42%)	
4.9.4a	Invite students to participate in the funeral Preparations of the school mate/class mate	104 (34%)	119 (38%)	38 (12%)	49 (16%)

Table 5: School roles in helping students to understand & accept death occurrences

4.9.1a

In responding to the statement, Seventy two percent (223 students) agreed with the statement. The remaining twenty eight percent (87 students) disagreed. This shows how the students attach the significance to the inclusion of death topic into the school curriculum. These responses answer one of the key research questions of this study: (see page 5, paragraph 1.1

The twenty eight percent of those who disagree may be the students who have not yet been affected by death or experienced its impacts. Reference could be made to question 4.4a to substantiate this. The responses to this question reflect that many students (67%) had by then not yet directly experienced death.

4.9.2a The responses indicate that seventy percent of the respondent do agree with the idea of inviting religious leaders and other professionals to school to address students on death and related issues) (See table 5 on page 89).The responses indicate that seventy percent of the respondents do agree with the idea of inviting religious leaders and other professionals to come to schools and address the student community on the impacts of death and related issues. Thirty percent disagree with that. Some of these students have not experienced any loss of significant one to death (ref: 4.4a) let alone lacking knowledge of death.

4.9.3a Allow students to see the corpse during the funeral service

Fifty eight percent (179 learners) of the respondents view the funeral procedure as an important event as far as bereavement intervention strategies is concerned. They take the viewing of the corpse as a psychological therapy and a better way of acknowledging that the person is indeed dead. Forty two percent (72 learners) of the students disagree with the statement. These could be the students who cannot come to terms with the reality of death let alone seeing the face of the deceased with their naked eyes. It should be appreciated that it is not everybody who would like to view the corps let alone attend the funeral service so the choice of the students need to be respected.

4.9.4a Invite the students to participate in the funeral preparations of the schoolmate or classmate.

The overwhelming majority of the students (223), seventy two percent agreed with the statement. Twenty-eight percent of the students did not subscribe to the idea of inviting students to participate in the funeral preparations of their schoolmate or classmate. The results show the fact that significant number of learners (72%) want to be given chance to participate in the funeral of their schoolmate or classmate.

4.10a

The question is similar to the previous one (4.9.5a) but is more direct to the students. The statement (4.10a), asked students **if they would like to participate, attend and view the dead body of the parent, relative or friend before and during the funeral**. Eighty percent (248 learners) strongly agreed with the statement. Twenty percent did not agree with the statement. This is important to be noted, because there are many factors that come into the mind of the child when deciding if he/she is to see the corps. So, not all the children will have the courage to want to be involved in the whole process of burial. There are number of factors that do influence the child to want to participate in the whole process of the funeral such as child's mental age, child's experience to the loss and the traditional up bringing of the child. So the 80% percent of the students who appreciate the importance of direct involvement may have experienced the benefits of participating. Equally the remaining twenty percent of those who disagree appreciate the benefits of not participating; nevertheless many students enjoy the benefits of participating.

4.11a

The question asked if the students have bereavement intervention strategies in their school.

In responding, schools were taken individually as shown below:

Table 6 showing the existence of bereavement strategies in schools.

SCHOOLS	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
Lobatse Sec School	6	10	18	20	54
Moshupa School	1	5	30	24	60
Kagiso School	2	19	29	10	60
Seepapitso School	14	18	28	16	76
Moeding College	9	14	25	12	60
Total	32 (10%)	66 (21%)	130 (42%)	82 (27%)	10

98 students (31%)

212 students (69%)

With reference to the above-tabulated results thirty one percent (98 students) agreed that there are bereavement intervention strategies in their schools. Out of the three hundred and ten students who participated in the study, two hundred and twelve participants (69%) disagreed with the statement. The results clearly show that many secondary schools do not have bereavement intervention strategies in schools thus the schools are possible not in a better position to assist those who are in need of bereavement assistance.

4.12a Do your parents or teachers allow you to attend funeral services of your close friend, classmates or other significant ones?

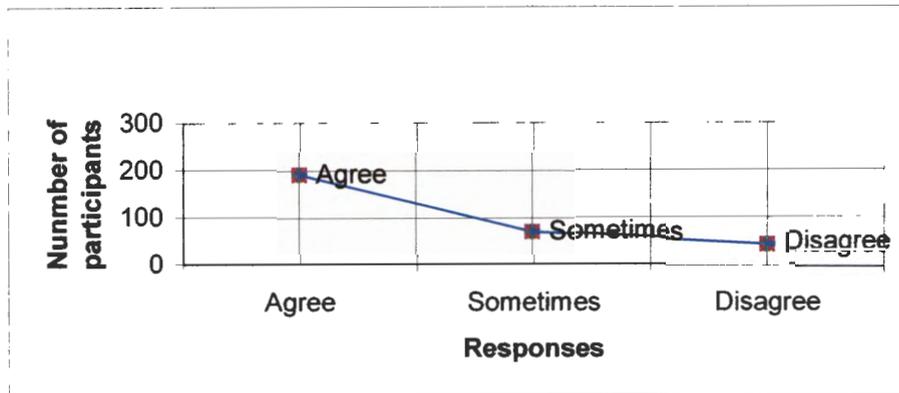


Figure 3: Permission to attend funeral service

Sixty two percent of the students (192) agreed with the statement. Fifteen percent of the students (47) indicated the contrary. Twenty three percent (71 learners) indicated that this funeral attendance is irregular and at times is not done. It is possible for students to attend the funeral of their significant ones because as a matter of practice, funeral services are held on weekends. This is the time when students are not at school except in the case of Moshupa School, which has the boarding facilities. The results also show the willingness of parents to let their children attend the funeral services.

4.13a Are bereavement intervention strategies sufficient for your school?

Twenty eight percent of all the students (87) contacted agreed that the intervention strategies are sufficient in their school. Two hundred and twenty three students (seventy two percent) are not happy with the bereavement intervention strategies arrangement in their schools. Generally majority of students do not agree with the above question . This could mean that the learners may not be getting what they want as far as the bereavement assistance is concerned.

4.14a Does your religion have a role to play in helping you to accept reality of death?

Seventy three percent (226) of the students indicated that religious intervention plays important role in helping bereaved to accept the occurrences of death. Nine percent (28) disagreed with the question. It is possible to have some people who have this perception

due to the reason that not all students who took part in the study are religiously inclined. Further more, Eighteen percent (56 learners) indicated that sometimes-religious belief could play a significant role in helping the bereaved to accept death. The results show that the caregivers to the bereaved learners may use one's religious belief as a strategy to help the same student to cope with death and grief. The nine percent of those who disagree may be calling for other intervention strategies to apply when helping bereaved student.

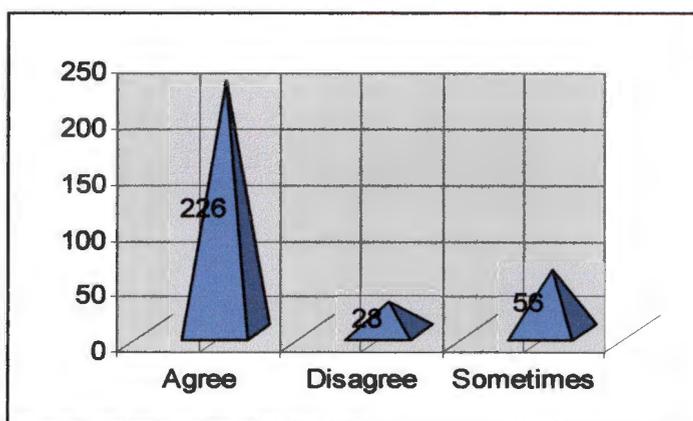


Figure4 Religion and bereaved children

4.15a What should be done in your school to improve bereavement intervention strategies for students?

The responses to the above question have attracted a spectrum of opinions. Below is the summary of the students' suggestion with reference to what could be put in place to improve bereavement intervention strategies in schools:

- ❖ Provide emotional support (See 4.6.7a: 59%)
- ❖ Religious leaders have to be invited to schools to console the bereaved (See 4.9.2a Table5: 26% + 44%=70%).
- ❖ Allow students to attend the funeral service (See 4.9.4: Table5: 34%+38%=74%)
Conduct memorial services upon the death of the student or staff member (see 4.6.3:Table5: 45%).
- ❖ Provision of guidance and counseling services for students who are bereaved (See 4.6.7a, Table 5: 59%).

- ❖ Provision of extra academic support (See 4.6.8a Table 5: 10%+75%=85%).
- ❖ Introduction of a comprehensive death topic in various subjects (See 4.7.3a: 55%)
- ❖ Formation of bereavement clubs in schools (See 4.8.3a, Table 4: 16% + 48%=64%)
- ❖ Students needs to be given time to be alone to reflect on what has happened.

RESULTS ANALYSIS FOR CLASS TEACHERS: CODE 4B

Note: Table 2 on page 69 reflects 11 (eleven) class-teachers, however, 8 (eight) of them responded to this questionnaire.

The questionnaire was in two sections. **Section A** deals with the teaching experience of the teacher while section B deals with the general questions around the roles of the class teacher to helping the bereaved students.

Part A 4.1b: The question seeks to know the teaching experience of the individual teacher. The period of teaching plays important role in giving teachers the opportunity to experience the situation of handling students' bereavement issues. There were eleven teachers who were expected to participate in the study but only eight of them returned the answered questionnaires. All seven but one teacher had more than four years teaching experience. All the eight teachers have been class teachers before and all of them had more than three years in their current schools (2006 being the base year). This means we are dealing with teachers who mostly have more than four years teaching experience hence could have at one stage handled the bereaved student.

4.2b

Have you experienced a bereaved child in this school for the past two years? (In this context, bereavement means the death of a significant one for example a parent, a relative or a close friend).

Seven class-teachers out of eight stated that they have at one stage experienced the bereaved child in the last two years except 1 teacher (twelve percent). This shows that significant number

of teachers have handled a bereaved child in their teaching experience and must have equally developed the means of assisting the learners to overcome the effects of losing a significant one.

Have you handled a bereaved student in the last two year?

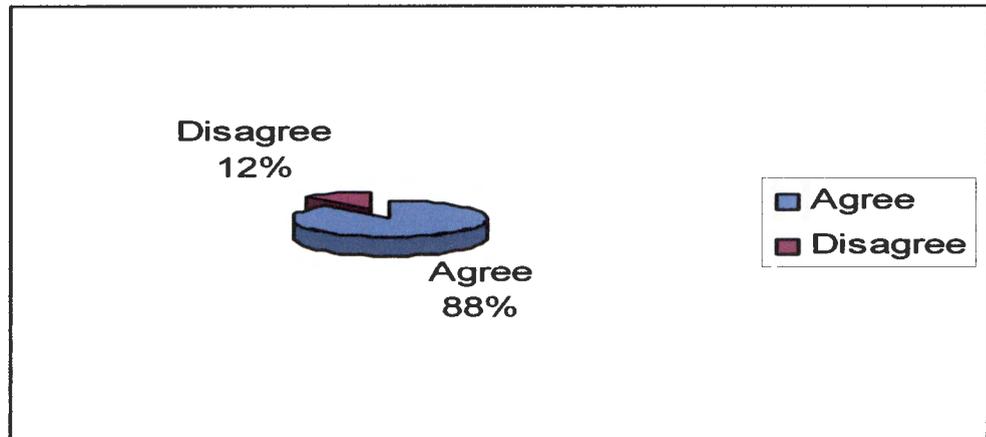


Figure 5: Percentage of teachers who have handled a bereaved student.

4.3b

Which best describes your school’s approach to child bereavement?

Fifty percent (4) class teachers regard their school approach to the child bereavement as formal while the other remaining fifty percent of them view it as informal. The informal perception indicates that, there is no formal policy or guidelines with regard to student bereavement intervention strategies. The absence of formal procedure may mean that schools are at liberty to help bereaved learners whenever they see it necessary. Other schools may not feel obliged to help bereaved learners. Fifty percent of the teachers have indicated that their schools have a loose bereavement approach. The other fifty percent of the teachers have shown that their schools have a formal way of disseminating help to their bereaved learners. There is no comprehensive bereavement approach in schools as it indicated by the fact that two teachers from the same school would have different approaches (formal and informal).

4.4b

Do you usually discuss the topic of death with your students?

Fifty percent (4) class teachers) do discuss the death topic in class with their pupils while the other four do not. This shows that some class teachers do recognise the significance of discussing

the topic and its effects with the bereaved students. On the other hand other teachers may not be valuing the related discussion hence one could say much is not done in schools to help bereaved learners cope with the effects of death.

4.5b Have you ever received any bereavement training?

Seven teachers (eighty seven percent) have never received bereavement training except one teacher. This shows that teachers generally do not have bereavement skills or knowledge of handling bereavement situations.

4.6b Do you have students bereavement intervention strategies in this school?

Six class teachers (seventy five percent) have indicated that they do not have bereavement intervention strategies in their individual schools. The learners have also earlier on indicated that they do not have bereavement intervention strategies in their schools (See 4.11a Table 6).

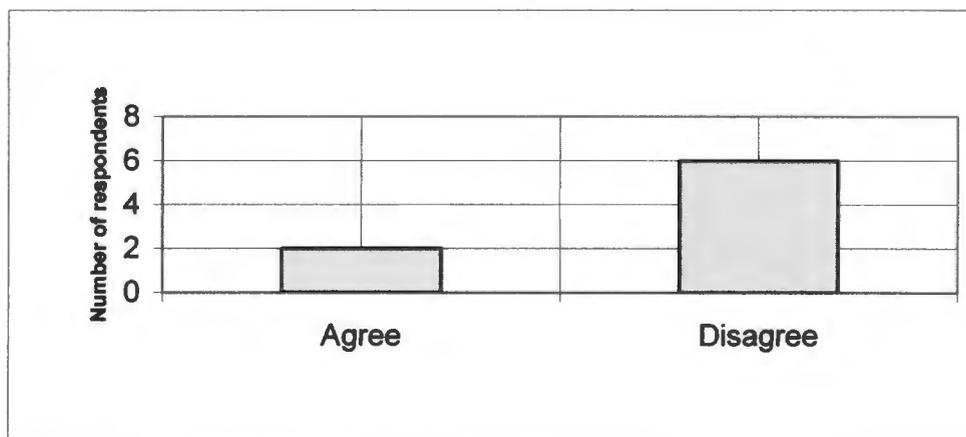


Figure 6: showing the number of teachers on presence or absence of bereavement strategies in schools.

4.7b Should death topic be included in the curriculum across the subjects in both Public and private schools?

All but one teacher advocated for the inclusion of death topic in the curriculum across the subjects in both the public and private schools. This shows how the clas teachers acknowledge the importance of the inclusion of death across the curriculum.

4.8b Please rate the following people in relation to how important you consider they are in connection with helping the bereaved children. Please circle one figure for each.

1= unimportant 2= of some importance 3= very important

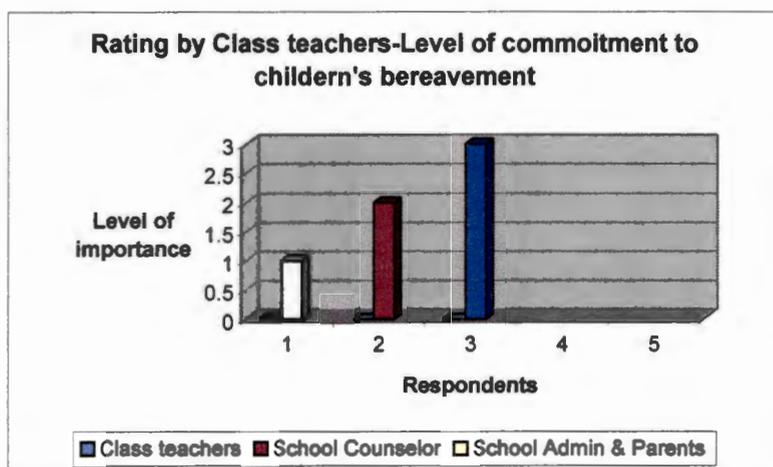


Figure 7 Rating by class teachers- level of bereavement commitment.

Note: From the class-teachers' perspective parents' involvement in the post-funeral period with their children is largely left to time-healing.

The respondents have put the stakeholders in order of their commitment in assisting bereaved learners: 1 School Administration and Parents, 2 teachers Counsellors 3. Class teachers. This shows the significant roles played by different people in realising the welfare of the bereaved learners. Every one is needed to the well fare and proper emotional, physical, social and general development of the child.

4.9b: Have you noticed any possible post-bereavement, psychological or physical effects in the recently bereaved child?

Out of the eight class teachers, five of them have noticed post-bereavement psychological or physical effects in the child. Three of the remaining teachers have not recognized that. The interpretation of this response is that the majority of teachers (by proportion do notice these signs on students. The 38% of teachers who fail to notice these signs is negligible. The signs mentioned in this question (4.9b) could be used by the care-giver to assist the bereaved learner to cope well after the death of the significant one. The signs (depending on their extremes) would help the class teachers to refer the bereaved learner to the school counselor for counseling.

4.10b If the answer is yes please specify

Below is a list of responses regarding the second part of question (4.10b).

The 63% of teachers who have responded to the positive in question 4.9b gave the following signs on the bereaved students:

- Being reserved: 10%
- Experiencing boredom: 11%
- Drop in academic performance: 20%
- Unpredictable behaviour: 10%
- Loss of focus in study: 5%
- Loss of concentration in class : 20%
- Withdrawal from school: 17%
- Laziness: 5%
- Loss of weight due to loss of appetite: 2%

Total 100%

These signals are important to the teachers to watch out for. They assist the educators to offer proper assistance, for example referring the learners to the professionals for help. The mentioned behaviour also helps the teacher to plan his/her lessons carefully bearing in mind that there are bereaved learners who need special attention. Learning and teaching activities should suit the circumstances of the learners. Extreme behaviours need referral while on the other hand punishment is not a solution.

4.11b Do teachers need some form of specialized training to handle bereaved children?

All respondents indicated that teachers need specialised training to handle bereavement issues in learning institutions. Many teachers have not been trained in the field of death and bereavement (4.5b, 4.4c, 4.1d and 4.6e) hence need such bereavement training.

4.12b What role does your school play during the funeral service of the student or student's relative?

Below is a list of roles played by schools during the funeral service of the student or student's relative:

- Contribute money to assist at the bereaved home
- Attend the funeral
- Provide transport for teachers to attend the funeral service
- Hold memorial services
- Transport students to attend the funeral service
- Prayer services are held in school
- Companies supplying schools with food and other commodities sometimes assist with food
- Chairs are borrowed to the bereaved home if the deceased is the student in that particular school
- Students are accorded chance to sing at the funeral service.

Four teachers out of the out of the eight write down the first five points, Thirty eight percent of teachers came up with three points and one teacher (12%) came up with one point. The results show that schools do assist bereaved learners contrary to what some students say about the help they get from schools (See table 3: 4.6.2a, 4.6.5a, and 4.6.3a).

RESULTS ANALYSIS FOR TEACHER COUNSELLORS: CODE 4C

They were five-school guidance and counseling teachers that were expected to participate and all of them did so.

4.1c As a school counselor do you have a written policy which deals with students and teachers bereavement in this school?

All the five schools indicated that they do not have any written policy on the bereavement of both the teachers and the students. The responses show that schools do not have bereavement written policies. The fact that the bereavement policy is not written even when it is there, schools is not necessarily obliged to help the bereaved learners.

4.2c Are the '*death and bereavement*' topics included in the school curriculum?

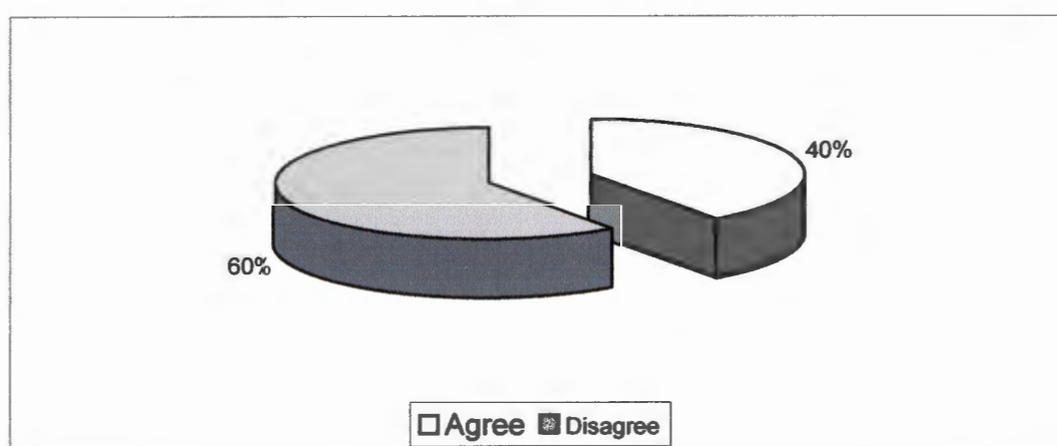


Figure 8: Inclusion of death and bereavement strategies in school curriculum

Three out of five teacher counselors (60%) disagreed, indicating that the *death* and *bereavement* topics are not included in the school curriculum. The remaining two counselors (40%) did agree that the two variables are inclusive in the school curriculum. The differences between the two groups could be emanating from the fact that the topic of death is not fully covered. The students have previously indicated that one of the

strategies schools could put in place to help the bereaved is to discuss the topic of death and its effects in class (4.9.1a) This is a reflection that the strategy is not in place. The school counselors have also indicated that bereavement strategies are not covered in the curriculum. Many students and teachers have shown that there are no bereavement intervention strategies (4.9.1a, 4.11a, 4.13a, 4.6a 4.6b, 5.7b, and 4.2c)

4.3c If the answer to question 4.2c is yes are these topics covered in details such that they equip students with the knowledge of death?

The three teacher counselors who previously disagreed that the topic of death and bereavement are included in the school curriculum (4.2c) indicate that the subjects that discuss death and bereavement do not go into the details such that the children could be equipped adequately. The two counselors do agree that the information given to the students about death is adequate and informative. The two guidance and counseling teachers may be satisfied with the death contents covered by various syllabi as previously mentioned (Setswana, moral Education Religious Education (reference to chapter 2.5.3 and 2.5.4). These two counselors provide responses that are contrary to what majority of the respondents are saying (ref to 4.9.1a, 4.11a, 4.13a, 4.6a 4.6b, 5.7b, and 4.2c).

4.4c Have you gone through some bereavement training to equip you to deal with bereavement issues in school?

All the teacher counselors but one have indicated that they have not been trained in the area of death and bereavement The lack of bereavement skills could negatively affect the bereaved children in schools because they need this knowledge to handle the consequences of death.

4.5c Teachers should be trained to give them the skills of handling students who are grieving and mourning the death of the significant ones (yes/no)?

The responses show that all the respondents do appreciate and acknowledge the importance of training teachers in the area of death and bereavement. Inadequate knowledge about something is disadvantageous as this hinders one's effort to those in need. Teachers have previously indicated the importance of training (4.11b).

4.6c The death of child's parents has profound psychological effects, which negatively impact the child academic performance (yes/no).

All the teacher counselors (100%) do agree with the statement that the death of child's significant ones has profound psychological effects, which negatively impact the child social, personal and academic performance.

4.7c How do you offer support to the bereaved students when they return to school after their parents' funeral?

Below is a list of the teacher counselors responses with regard to the support they offer to the bereaved students:

- ❖ Provide counseling services.
- ❖ Encourage the bereaved child to register with the social community officers for both emotional and material assistance.
- ❖ Provide cycles of support (teachers go around the surrounding villages to look for students who have absconded or withdrawn themselves from schools for various reasons and encourage them to return to school). This is done in conjunction with the Social Community Development office (Government office which provides assistant to the socially and economically disadvantaged community members)
- ❖ Encourage the bereaved through providing emotional and spiritual support.
- ❖ Providing talking therapy (talk to the bereaved, allow them to speak out

their feelings, encourage them to talk about positive things they remember about the deceased.

- ❖ Encouraged the bereaved to engage in extra mural activities.
- ❖ Teach the bereaved the survival skills: (communication skills, study skills, how to cope without the deceased, how to seek help, problem skills, life planning and self employment.
- ❖ Refer them to the bereavement specialist when necessary (outside schools).

4.8c Have you ever organized a workshop to resource staff on the matter concerning death and bereavement?

None of the teacher counselors have organized a workshop to resource staff on the matter concerning death and bereavement. This workshop can still be organized in schools and one or two resource persons invited from outside to disseminate bereavement information to teachers, but the teachers should be proactive and initiative to plan and organise for this workshop.

4.9c During student bereavement counseling, do you consider the bereaved's religious orientation as a tool to use to help the child to accept death?

Four school counselors (80%) do normally consider religious orientation of the bereaved child as a tool to use to assist the child to accept the reality of death. One teacher indicated that he/she hardly considers the child's religious inclination during counseling because he/she is not a religious person.

4.10c Is the bereavement support children get from various organizations adequate?

All the respondents have indicated that the support the bereaved get from various organizations is not enough.

4.11c Do you ever engage/involve bereaved students in any activities during the counseling process such as (giving them literature materials about death to read, letting them write down their feelings, self reflection in a quiet room and letting them talk and cry?

All the guidance teachers (100%) do agree that they normally engage bereaved students in some of the activities mentioned above during counseling sessions. These teacher counselors did not specify the kind of activities they refer to.

4.12c Does the school have any established avenue of support for bereaved learners and open communication within the learning institution (yes/no)?

The respondents do not agree and have indicated that the schools do not have established avenues of support and open communication within the school. The responses show that there is no specific special room/place where the bereaved learners can go and share their experiences or sit quietly and do have self reflection.

4.13c Do you accompany your students to the funeral service of their relatives/significant ones in your capacity as a counselor?

Eighty percent (4 teacher counselors) rarely accompany the bereaved students to the funeral venues. One counselor agreed that he/she does go with the child together with other staff members to the funeral place. Generally teachers do not go with the bereaved learners to the funeral places. This may also mean teachers do attend the funerals but not necessarily accompanying learners. Students have earlier on indicated that teachers generally do not attend funerals (6.5a).

4.14c As a school counselor what type of assistance do you normally offer the bereaved child?

Below are the responses of teacher counselors:

- ❑ Provision of bereavement counseling to the bereaved children.
- ❑ Refer the profound bereaved to the specialist professionals outside school in the Village /town (most of these schools are located in big villages or urban areas)
- ❑ Advise the bereaved to enroll in the Government orphan care program so as to get food, clothes and money from the Government' relevant department.
- ❑ Help the child to overcome feelings experienced (loneliness, sadness, grief and despair)
- ❑ Provide some life skills to the child with the literature about death (coping with death accepting death, grieving and surviving with out the deceased.
- ❑ Encourage close class/school mates to provide support to the bereaved students.
- ❑ Notify education authorities about students who lost significant ones while about to write the final external examination as this could create a second chance for the child to repeat the grade.

ANALYSIS OF HEADS OF DEPARTMENT: CODE 4D

The questionnaire deals with the school Heads of Departments or Pastoral care Officers. Ten participants were expected to take part, but only seven took part. This makes the return rate to be seventy percent. The Heads of Departments are from the following schools: Moshupa School: 2 Seepapitso: 1, Lobatse School: 2 Moeding college 1 Kagiso school: 1.

The questionnaire is given a code: 4D. Each question is written with a D code for example: 4.1d is how question one will be written.

4.1d Do you have teachers trained in the area of children bereavement?

Out of the seven Pastoral care office or Head of Departments, five of them (71%) indicated that, there are no trained teachers in the area of children bereavement. The remaining Heads of Department indicated that they have some teachers trained in the concerned field.

4.2d Teachers should be trained to handle issues of death and bereavement.

All the participants (100%) agreed with the statement, which shows that dealing with grief, mourning death or bereavement intervention strategies need trained and well-informed personnel.

4.3.d Death has psychological and Educational effect on students.

All the officers (86%) but one agreed that death has psychological and educational effects on the student's well fare.

4.4d There are supporting measures in place to assist students returning to school after the death of student's relative.

Seventy one percent (five officers) did agree with the statement and two teachers (29%) refuted the presence of the concerned measures in their respective schools. In contrary students have indicated that supporting measures are not in place (4.5a). So the supporting measures that are said to be in place in schools to help the returning bereaved learners are generally not adequate let alone being effective.

4.5d Students are normally involved in the funeral preparations of their schoolmate or classmate.

Five Pastoral officers (71%) agreed with the above statement. Twenty nine percent (two teachers) disagreed with the statement. General responses indicate that the students are given the chance to bid their colleague a farewell through their participation. Students do cook, prepare tea for people, they sweep the yard, and they are slotted in the program to sing, utter something, read the fare well message and even to carry the casket. These are done especially if the deceased was the student’s mother, father or the student him/herself.

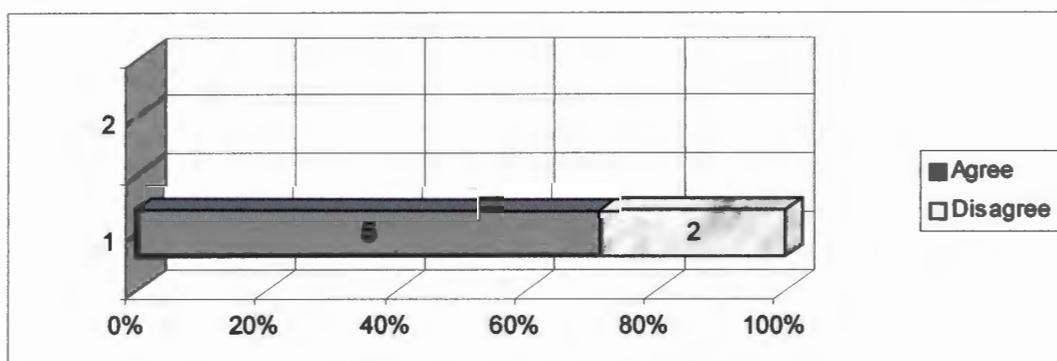


Figure 9: Involvement of students in funeral preparation.

4.6d Death as a topic should be infused in the school curriculum across the subjects.

All the respondents (100%) agreed with the statement. This is a clear indication that, death topic and other related information are important to the education of the children in order to prepare them emotionally for the future occurrence of grief causing event. Seventy percent of the students have indicated that they want the topic of death and bereavement to be included in their learning subjects (4.7.1a). Fifty five percent of the students call for the inclusion of death topic in all the subjects (4.7.3a). The results in (4.3b) shows that the schools approach

to handling death issues are fifty percent formal and fifty percent informal. The analysis indicates that death topic and other related issues like bereavement intervention strategies are not exclusively discussed with students. Many are calling for the inclusion of death topic and bereavement strategies in the school curriculum.

4.7d. Ministry of Education adequately assists the bereaved students in schools.

Three Heads of departments acknowledged that the government is doing enough to assist the bereaved children in secondary schools. On the other hand four of the participating Pastoral care officers disagree with the statement 4.7d. These four Heads of Department come from Moshupa, Seepapitso, Moeding and Kagiso secondary school. Though many Heads of Departments 57% have indicated that the Government’s assistance is not enough the 43% of the other Head of departments who have indicated that the Government is assisting the bereaved learners should not be ignored.

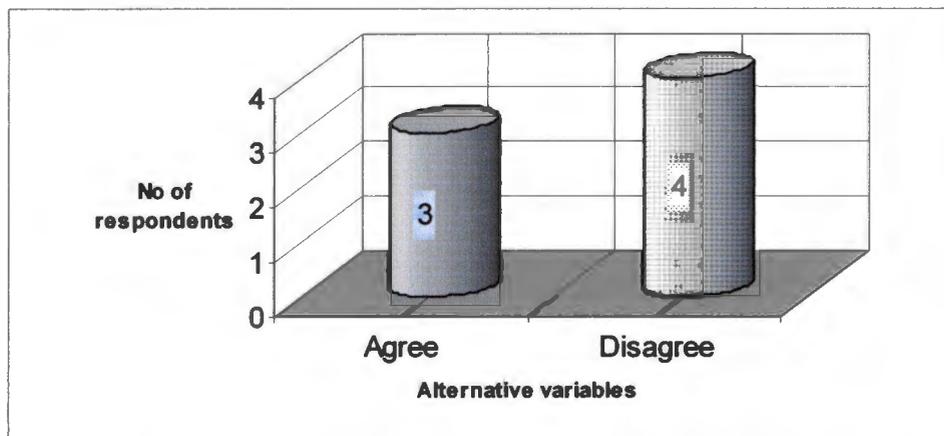


Figure 10: Ministry of Education’s assistance to the bereaved learners

4.8d Is there any key figure in school whom the bereaved children can relate or refer to for assistance?

All the seven teachers agreed with the statement by acknowledging that there are people whom the children can always refer to for assistance in times of grief and traumatic situations. This is possibly true because students can be referred to their educational, social, personal or vocational problems to Guidance teachers, Pastoral teachers, and

subject teachers or even to the non-teaching staff (school secretary, chief cook and chief security guard) for help.

4.9d Do schools need a written policy, which deals with childrens' bereavements intervention strategies?

Out of the seven pastoral care officers, four of them (57%) indicated that schools need a bereavement policy to guard against any untimely grief occurrence for students that could affect them. One pastoral officer did not see the need of any policy with regard to bereavement. Two Pastoral teachers did not respond to the question without stating the reasons for not responding. Despite their non-response, the overall responses indicate that, a bereavement policy is needed in schools.

4-4.9e ANALYSIS OF THE SCHOOL HEAD/ DEPUTY QUESTIONNAIRE:

CODE 4E

There were five school principals or deputy school heads that were expected to participate in the study but only four school heads took part. The school Heads came from Seepapitso, Lobatse, Moeding and Kagiso secondary Schools.

4.1e How often does this school experience students losing parents/relative through death?

Two schools indicated that death cases are reported monthly, one school Head indicated that death is reported once an average of six months. One school Head stated that, he/she does not know. One principal did not return his/her questionnaire. Generally death, which directly or indirectly affects the learners, does occur in schools. It should also be appreciated that some deaths are not necessarily reported hence this could not be giving a true reflection of what is happening on the ground. Below is the summary of the responses of the school Heads:

Death occurs once in an average of one month = 2 schools

Death occurs once in Six month =1 School

Death occurs on average of 12 months =0 School

Do not know = 1 school

Did not return the answered questionnaire =1 school

4.2e Does the school have a policy which caters for those children who lose parents or relatives?

Three School Heads indicated that, there is no such policy. One school Head acknowledged the presence of the policy in his/her school. This means many schools do not have the concerned policy.

4.3e What type of assistance in the form of materials does the school offer the bereaved children?

Below are the responses of the schools, which assist the bereaved children:

- Schools make trips to the bereaved homes.
- Both students and the staff members attend funerals (See 4.6.5a).
- Both the students and staff members make financial contributions (See: 4.6.1a)
- Guidance & counseling services are provided to the bereaved (See 4.6.7a)
- Are normally borrowed school furniture like chairs, tables and cooking utensils (See 4.6.2a).
- Spokesperson is normally sent to speak at the funeral (See: 4.6.6a).
- Provides emotional, social and spiritual support (See 4.7c).

4.4e How are staff members and students notified or informed about student/teacher/parent's death?

Below are responses of school heads:

- Students are notified through their class teachers: 4 school heads.
- Teachers get information in the staff meeting: 1 school head.
- Internal memos are normally circulated to staff members: 3 school heads
- Information is sometimes disseminated in the general meetings: 2 school heads.

4.5e Is there a provision in the school budget to train or workshop teachers on bereavement related issues?

Three school heads have indicated that there is no such provision and one school head acknowledged that there is such arrangement. The result shows that many schools do not have provision for training teachers in the area of bereavement, nevertheless the provision that has been acknowledged by one school head could be neglected.

4.6 e. Do you recommend for specialist bereavement training for teachers?

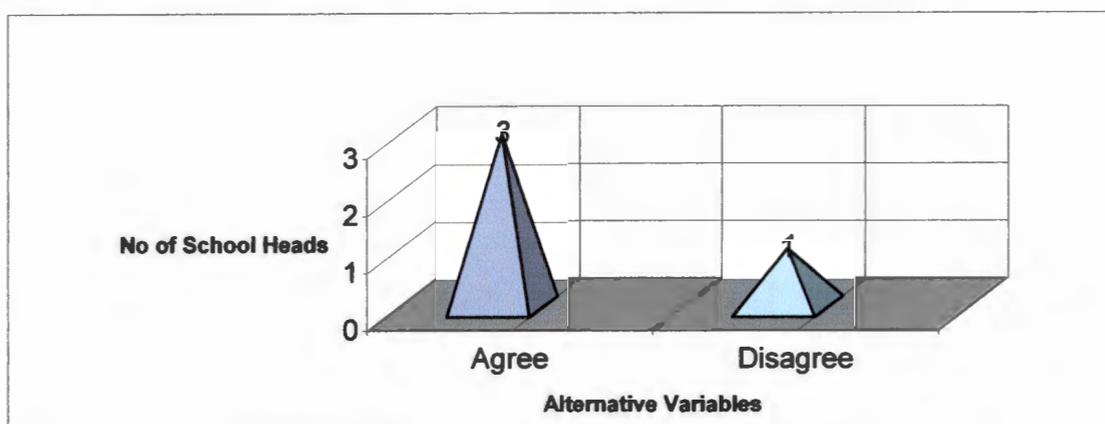


Figure 11: Need for specialist bereavement training for teachers

Three school heads support the training of teachers in the area of bereavement. One school head did not support the idea of training teachers in death and bereavement. The result indicates that many school heads support the training of teachers in the area of bereavement.

4.7e What is the input of the Ministry of Education as far as *student bereavement* is concerned?

Moeding College head: Stated that the Ministry provides counseling services through Guidance & Counseling program and other support services in schools such as Peer Approach Counseling to Teenagers which uses students to help other students who have social, academic or behavioural problems, Pastoral office and class teachers.

Kagiso Secondary School Head: Indicated that the ministry of Education provides counseling services to those who have problems.

Moshupa School Head indicated that the Government is not doing enough to support bereavement program..

Seepapitso School Head said that the Ministry of Education advocates for both social and economic support, for example, Guidance and Counselling provision and the non-payment of school fees for the orphans.

The school heads have shown that the government has an input in assisting bereaved learners through the provision of services like guidance and counseling , Peer support groups, pastoral care and exempting the orphans from paying school fees.

4.8e Parents should participate in the bereavement counseling of the students in the school.

All the school Heads (100%) agreed with the statement that parents have role to play with regard to the issue affecting the welfare of their children.

PARENTS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION: CODE 4F

Here the questions were written both in Setswana and English to cater for those who do not understand English or Setswana. There were twenty respondents representing the Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Four PTA members were taken from each school (4x5) and were randomly selected.

4.1f Is there a bereavement policy in the school your child attends that caters for the bereaved children? (A gona le thulaganyo kana lenaneo mo sekolong sa ngwana wa gago le le itebagantseng le go thusa ba ba tlhokafaletsweng ke masika le ditsala?)

Table 7: Presence of bereavement policy in schools

Responses	Moshupa Sch	Seepapitso Sch	Lobatse Sec	Moeding	Kagiso Sec
No	2	3	4	3	2
Yes	2	1	0	1	2

The results indicate that fourteen parents have shown that there is no program through which schools do assist the bereaved children. Six parents acknowledged the existence of such programs in the schools their children attend. Few parents (30%) have indicated that there are learners' bereavement policies in schools. This sentiment is shared by the learners who have indicated that bereavement intervention strategies are not sufficient in their schools (4.13a). Teachers have too showed that they are no bereavement intervention strategies in schools (4.6b, 4.12c, and 4,2e). Few respondents have indicated that there is such policy of bereavement

4.2f If there is such policy, how does it assist the bereaved children (Fa ele gore go na le thugaganyo ya go thusa ba ba tlhokafaletsweng, thulaganyo e e ba thusa jang?)

Parents from different schools came up with the following points:

- Traumatic counseling services are offered: 1 parent
- Memorial services are held: 2 parents
- School representatives are sent to the bereaved family: 1 parent
- Students and teachers contribute money to assist the bereaved family: 1parent
- Bereaved students are often given academic cover work upon their return to school: 1 parent

It should be pointed out that the above stated points do not necessarily give the impression that there is bereavement policy, because the assistance offered by schools is done haphazardly and sometimes nothing is done according to the parents, because schools are not obliged by any written policy.

4.3f Is the death topic included in the school curriculum? (A lenaneo la dithuto le

akareditse dithuto tsa loso le ditla morago tsa lone?)

Forty five percent (9 parents) agreed with the fact that death topic have been included in the school curriculum. Fifty five percent of the parents have indicated that the death topic is not included in their children education.

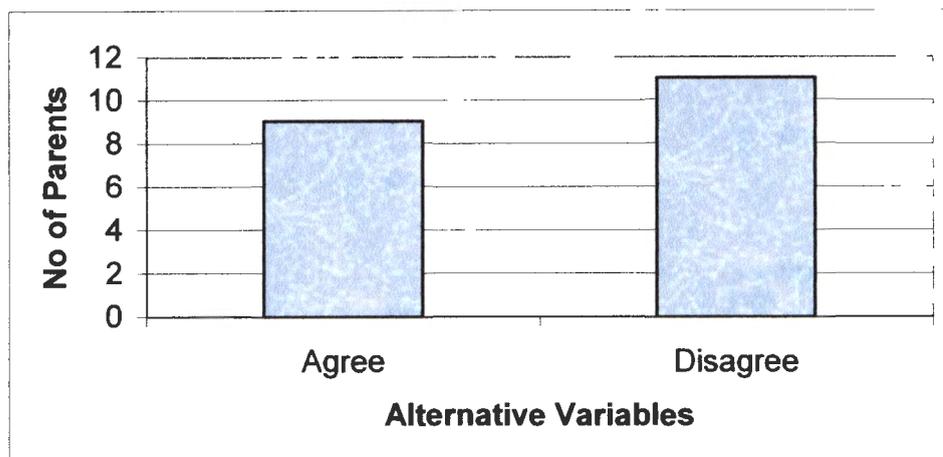


Figure12: Inclusion of death topic in the curriculum

4.3.1f What is your comment on the above question? (Kakgelo ya gago ke eng ka potso e e fa godimo?)

The parents have indicated that the information is not adequately covering the important aspects of death. This calls for the death information to be increased in depth, such that it equip the children with the survival skills that would enable them to withstand the traumatic effects of death. The comments of those who have shown that the topic of death has been included in the school curriculum, argued that students are equipped with survival skills and normally cope when the death strikes. This is contrary to the responses of students of whom seventy percent of them have indicated that death and bereavement have not been included in their learning subjects (4.7.1a, 4.7.2a). Teacher counselors have too indicated that death and bereavement topics are not sufficiently included in the curriculum (4.2c). Although the parents are divided on this issue, many parents are not satisfied with what is provided to their children in the area of death and bereavement.

4.4f Do you allow your children (secondary school children) to attend funeral services if they wish to do so?(A o na le gone go fa ngwana wa gago sebaka sa go tsenelela phitlho ya mongwe yo o tlhokafetseng?)

All the twenty parents (100%) do allow their children to attend the funeral service of their significant ones. Parents do appreciate and acknowledge the importance of allowing the children to attend the funeral service if they wish to do so.

4.5f Do you allow your children to participate in all the funeral arrangement and other activities leading to the burial of their relative or friend? (A ka gale o letlelela ngwana wa gago go nna le seabe mo dipaakanyong tsa phitlho le gone go tsaya karolo mo dithulaganyong tsa phitlho ya losika kana tsala ya gagwe?)

Eighteen parents (90%) do allow their children to participate in the funeral arrangement and other activities leading to the burial of the deceased. Two parents do not allow their children to participate in part of the funeral arrangements. This does not necessarily mean that the two parents do not completely deny their children the chance to attend the funeral service as this was revealed by the (4.4f) results. The result indicates that children do participate in the whole funeral activities.

4.6f Is the bereaved child given some form of guidance or emotional support to assure him/her that his/her welfare will not be greatly affected (A go na le ka fa batsadi ba a tleng ba gomotse le go tshepisa ngwana yo o tlhokafaletseng gore o babalesegile le gore o tsile go tlhokomelesega?)

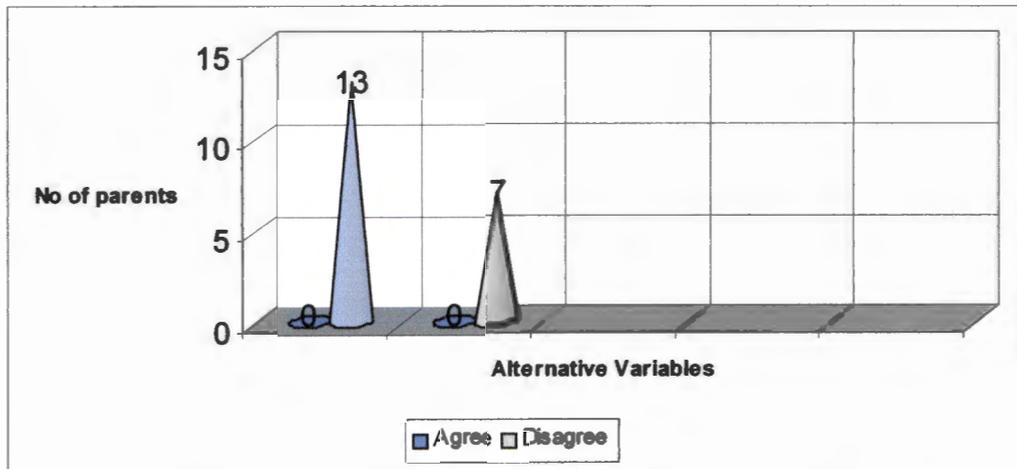


Figure 13: Provision of guidance & Counseling by elders

Thirteen parents (sixty five percent) of the twenty parents indicated that elders provide guidance and counseling services to assure the bereaved child that his/her welfare will be secured and taken care of. Seven parents (forty five percent) did not agree that such counseling service is given to the bereaved learners because it is done irregularly. This shows that the guidance given to the bereaved by elders is sometimes done and at times is not done.

4.7f How often do parents come to school to address, guide and comfort the children in times of peace, grief or tragedy? (Ke makgeto a le kae, a batsadi ba etelang sekolo go bua le bana , go ba gomotsa, go ba kaela tsela le go ba kgothatsa? Mo dinakong tsa boitumelo le khutsafalo?)

All the twenty parents (one hundred percent) have indicated that they normally go to school to offer the mentioned services when asked by the school authorities. The implication of the responses shows that parents go to school to attend meetings. Although the parents do not voluntarily offer the important services mentioned, the results indicate their readiness upon request to come to schools and offer help.

4.8f What aspects of learners' bereavement intervention strategies would you like to see included in the program? (Ke dife dintlha tsa konokono tse o ka eletsang di tsenngwa mo lenaneong la go thusa baithute ba ba tlhokafaletsweng?)

Below are the suggested aspects that could be included in the students' bereavement intervention strategies for Botswana Secondary Schools by the parents:

- Inclusion of detailed death topic and related issues across the curriculum.
- Effective guidance and counseling services to assist the bereaved students.
- Bereavement intervention strategies written policy in schools
- Wide spectrum of material support from schools towards bereaved children such As chairs, pots, school transport, financial help, provision of school hall for memorial services, sending school representatives to the bereaved home, academic help, etc).
- Full and binding parental participation policy should be in place in schools (helping through guiding, fund raising, memorial services or parent representing the school at the bereaved family's place).

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the study brings closure to the interpretation of the data. This is a the section of the study where the researcher looks backward for distilling into a few paragraphs precisely what has been accomplished in each phase of the research activity, Leedy and Ormrod (2001).

5.1 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM INVESTIGATED.

The content of bereavement section of school curriculum: A study of bereavement intervention Strategies for Senior Secondary Schools Learners in the South –East of Botswana.

5.1.1 Students

With reference to sub-section Code 4A (see page 82) of the thirteen schools in the south of the country five schools (thirty eight percent) were used. This makes 21% of the public secondary schools in Botswana. The results obtained though could not generally give a true picture of what is happening in other schools that did not form the sample of the population. The findings could reflect what could probably be a reality in many schools in Botswana. The gender used would not in any way affect the out- come of the study, nevertheless, both sexes were used to appreciate the indiscriminative effects of death on everybody because death befalls sexes, rich, poor, young and the old unrepentantly, (Mallon 1998). Three hundred and ten learners were used in the study.

Form five students (final year) were used in the study for the reason that they have longer period of stay in their schools and have most probably gone through the curriculum subjects taught and would therefore better understand many questions asked (4.3a,figure 1 page 85).

The study has revealed that significant number of (67%) learners have not directly experienced death of a close relative since the time they came to their respective schools. The understanding of a *close relative* may differ from one student to the other. To some learners, parents mean biological mother or father while to others the concept of *parent* may refer to any relative hence the interpretation of *parental death* could be viewed from different angles.

The general responses indicate that bereaved learners are not accorded relevant assistance in schools. This can have a negative effect on the welfare of the learners (figure 2 page 83). The study has revealed that bereaved learners are not given financial assistance as shown by question (4.6.1a page 85). The provision of school furniture as a form of assistance to the bereaved family is not adequate (See 4.6.2a page 85) such as chairs, table, cooking utensils etc. Many learners have shown that memorial services are not frequently held (4.6.3a page 85). With reference to general responses in (table 1 statement 4.6.4a -4.6.9a page 85) the results indicate that schools are not doing enough to offer sufficient assistance to the bereaved learners. There are instances where the learners' responses show that their schools do assist students as indicated in 4.6.6a, 4.6.7a and 4.6.9a page 85). This help is not sufficient according to the students. The schools can play a pivotal role in this area and provide love, care, moral support and guidance to ease the stress associated with the loss of a significant one.

Adequate guidance is needed by learners especially when death strikes as this may be a traumatic event to the learners. This event can evoke distress, anger and guilt and bring to life previous traumas. The results also show that bereaved learners are not given extra lessons after missing lessons the time they had gone to attend the relatives' funerals (4.6.8a). This would have a great negative impact in the academic achievement of learners and may lead to their poor academic performance. A call is made for greater school engagement by forming a school-based bereavement centre which provides psycho social support to the bereaved students.

Meanwhile this study has revealed that the topic of death and bereavement has not been included in the learning subjects of students. An over view assessment of the curriculum of sampled of senior secondary schools in south east Botswana appears to be lacking substance and contents about bereavement intervention strategies. Much is not covered especially how the bereaved learners are assisted to sustain themselves and cope with the after math of the death. Death, bereavement, grief and other related information about mourning is neither covered in details nor disseminated to the learners efficiently and effectively to accord learners some coping skills, (ref 4.7.2a, 4.7.3a, and 4.9.1a page 89).

There is a need to include the topic death in the curriculum. The importance of this inclusion was emphasized by the class teachers as indicated in (4.7b page 97). This could mean that class teachers do acknowledge that, the school curriculum does not adequately cover death and other related significant aspects. The teachers also do appreciate that the adequacy of the death contents on the school curriculum could assist and release learners who suffer emotional pain and preoccupation that could prevent them from getting on with learning. School counselors (4.2c and 4.3c page 101 &102), heads of department, School Heads (4.2c, 4.8e page 101& 112) and parents (4.3f page114) have also shown that there is a need to include death in the curriculum. Almost all the participants in this study have advocated for the inclusion of death in the curriculum.

Many learners 72% (4.9.1a page 85) acknowledge the importance of the discussion of death related issues in school. The research has also shown that learners appreciate the roles of religious leaders when it comes to assisting the bereaved learners to accept and appreciate the reality of death. Religion has a prominent position in many peoples' lives. People receive comfort and reassurance in religious beliefs. Despite the fact that one's religion is vital to cope with the occurrence of death, it is also essential to acknowledge that not all students are religiously inclined hence care givers have to consider that and have in mind that not all the bereaved learners would benefit from religious point of view. This has been shown by the thirty percent of learners who have shown that religious approach does not help them in anywhere to adjust to the death, (4.9.2a page 90).

Eighty percent of school counselors (ref 4.9c page 91) consider religious orientation of the child as a tool to use to assist individual to cope with the occurrence of death. Furthermore many students (58%) ref (4.9.3a page 80) view the funeral procedure as an important event as far as bereavement intervention strategies are concerned. Most of the students regard the viewing of the corpse as a psychological therapy and affirmative way of acknowledging that the person is indeed late. On the other hand some learners (42%) do not agree with the significance of viewing the corpse. The choice of the person needs to be respected and appreciated. The importance of bereaved to attend the funeral service of the deceased has been documented extensively, (Doka 1989), and Grollman (1993 cited in Brown, 1997). The funeral is overwhelmingly considered a valuable ritual in helping the bereaved adjust to the loss of a loved one (Klicker, 1997, referenced by Brown, 1997).

Many learners would like to be invited to participate in the funeral preparations of their colleagues (4.9.4a page 90) and only a few do not subscribe to the idea (4.9.4a page 90). The twenty eight percent of learners who did not want to participate in the funeral arrangement could be the children who are still attached to the African traditional belief that funeral issues are entirely done by the elders. Generally learners would like to be accorded the opportunity to participate and attend the funeral activities of their significant relative and should never be forced to do what they do not feel comfortable to do.

The schools do not have bereavement intervention strategies as it has been indicated by Sixty nine percent of the learners (see: 4.11a page 92). This shows that bereaved learners are not adequately and effectively assisted in schools (4.6a page 85). The assistance the schools accord the bereaved learners should not be underestimated but rather appreciated. The fact of the matter is that learners call for the assistance to be intensified to benefit them. The results of the study have indicated that learners' parents always help their children to help and adjust to the occurrence of death in the family or community through allowing them to attend the funeral services. This is a paradigm shift from the traditional practice in which parents used to be the only ones attending the funeral services (4.13a

page 93). It is a powerful and helpful first step in adjusting to the death of someone they love. Beside from providing the visual confirmation of death, the funeral offers support and comfort in a variety of ways (Klicker cited in Brown 1997).The learners have suggested aspects that could be considered in improving bereavement intervention strategies to be more effective and helpful. Below are some of them:

- ❖ Provide emotional support.
- ❖ Religious leaders have to be invited to schools to console the bereaved.
- ❖ Allow students to attend the funeral service.
- ❖ Conduct memorial services upon the death of the student or staff member.
- ❖ Provision of guidance and counseling services for students who are bereaved.
- ❖ Provision of extra academic support.
- ❖ Introduction of a comprehensive death topic in various subjects.

These mentioned aspects are a clear indication that what could be in place currently in schools is neither adequate nor effective hence there is a need for the suggestions brought by the learners. If the schools are operating under similar conditions this shows bereaved learners are not catered for emotionally, psychologically, socially and academically to assist them to sustain themselves and to help them to cope with the effects of death. Coping with death as viewed by Stroebe and Schut (1999) is not a regular phase in adolescent life. The youth have to face normal environmental and physiological demands, and this calls for the new life skills like survival skills, problem skills and decision making skills.

In conclusion, the study has revealed that schools do not have effective bereavement intervention programs to help the learners to adjust to the grieving process. The topic of death has not been infused or included comprehensively into the school curriculum to equip learners generally about the aspects of death, grief, mourning, bereavement counseling, adjusting and accepting death. The majority of the learners are calling for this inclusion into the curriculum one's religious orientation plays a significant role in bringing the bereaved close to the reality of death and in assisting them to accept it. Many learners have not directly experienced the loss of significant ones through death. Learners

are not given bereavement help such as emotional, psychological, academic help as well as the stress relieving help when experiencing the loss through death in schools. Learners feel comfortable to be accorded opportunity to see the corpse and to participate in the funeral arrangement of their colleagues.

5.1.2 Class Teachers

All the teachers who are respondents in this study conducted have teaching experience and have engaged with the bereaved learners. The study has shown that schools do not have a specific formal way of approaching death in schools or bereavement aspects. Schools handle bereavement issues differently as there is no death or bereavement policy which is strictly followed. Fifty percent (4 class teachers) have reported to have a formal death policy (4.3b, page 96). Many teachers are not trained in the area of death and bereavement (4.5b page 96). If the educators are expected to help the bereaved learners they are equally expected to be trained in the area of death and bereavement, otherwise the expected help for the learners is a far fetched possibility. This training could form a pre service module at the teacher training Institutions.

Educators already in the field should go through a special arranged training course that may be held during the vacations at the regional education centres. The fact that schools as the study has revealed, do not have bereavement strategies could confirm that schools indeed lack the knowledge to implement these bereavement strategies (See 4.6b figure 6 page 97). Many educators are advocating for the inclusion of death module in the curriculum. Many stakeholders (counselors, class teachers, school administration, staff members and parents) do play significant roles in helping the learners during times of death in their families (4.8b page 97). Teachers should always watch out for certain behaviour displayed by the learners which could be interpreted as possible post bereavement psychological or physical effects in the recently bereaved learners 4.9b-4.10b page: 97-98):

- Being reserved.
- Experiencing boredom.

- Drop in academic performance.
- Unpredictable behaviour.
- Loss of focus in study.
- Loss of concentration in class.

If these behaviours are properly observed and correctly interpreted, bereaved learners could relevantly be accorded help. These behaviours can also help the educator to plan his/her lessons carefully taking into consideration the bereaved learners.

Schools, to some extent, assist bereaved families with transport, contribute money, hold memorial services and attend the funeral service of the learner's relative (4.12b page 99), contrary to the views of the learners. The learners though appreciate the help accorded to them by their schools but they have indicated that the help is not enough (See 4.6a table 1 page 85).

In conclusion schools do not have written comprehensive bereavement intervention strategies for learners. There is a lack of training for teachers in the area of death and bereavement, so the Government or the relevant ministry is called upon to infuse the topic of death and learners' bereavement in the module of the curriculum as part of the pre-service requirement at the teacher training institutions. Teachers are calling for the in-service dissemination of the bereavement skills to equip them to help the bereaved learners. Many stakeholders have a role to play in helping the bereaved learners to adjust to the death of significant ones. There are certain post bereavement psychological or physical effects in the recently bereaved learners which need to be carefully observed so as to accord the learners relevant and appropriate assistance. Educators or schools do to some extent assist the learners though the bereaved learners doubt the effectiveness and adequacy of this help, nevertheless the students do appreciate the help. Teachers must go the extra mile in realizing the bereavement help needed by the bereaved students and should show the administration the serious gap that needs to be filled if the bereaved learners are to successfully complete their grieving process. Class teachers should be aware that upon the return of the bereaved learners from the burial of the relatives, they

may not feel equal to the task of learning and may instead be a disturbing influence (crying, absenteeism and attention deficit).

5.1.3 Guidance and Counseling Teachers.

Like other staff members and students, the school counselors have shown that schools do not have written bereavement policy (4.1c page 101). This is an indication that the learning institutions do not have effective policy to assist bereaved learners to adjust to the effects of death. The failure to assist bereaved learners has a great negative impact on the students. Sixty percent of the school counselors have indicated that school curriculum lacks the inclusion of death and bereavement (See: 4.2c fig 8 page 101). School counselors provide the bereaved learners with emotional and spiritual counseling (4.7c page 103). School counselors also lack bereavement skills hence need to be trained.

5.1.4 Heads of Departments

Out of the seven Heads of department who responded to the questionnaires, seventy one percent of them have indicated that teachers are not trained to handle the death and bereavement issues in schools (4.1d page 102). The heads of department advocate for the training of teachers. These officers have also indicated that there are some measures in place which aim at assisting the bereaved learners. The learners are also involved in the funeral preparations as a way of helping them to accept and adjust to effects of the trauma of death especially if the deceased is the student or teacher. The study has also revealed that the Government is not doing enough to remedy the situation (See 4.7d page 107) according to the head of departments.

5.1.5 School Heads

The four school Heads have indicated that schools experienced reported cases of death related to the relatives of students or even students themselves monthly. Other deaths are not reported to school (4.1e page 110). Schools lack written bereavement policies which makes schools less effective and less committed to offer bereavement help to the learners (4.2e page 110). The school Heads empathise with the bereaved learners through visiting the families, attending funeral services, contributing money to assist at the bereaved

homes as well as providing guidance and counseling service to the bereaved learners.(4.3e page 110). Care is normally taken when the learners are notified about the death of the significant one (4.4e page 111).This care was also emphasized by Staudacher (1987) as he indicates that special sensitivity and awareness is needed when notifying the child about someone's death. The language should be appropriate to the child and the truth should be told.

The school Heads have categorically indicated that there is no provision in the school budget for the training of teachers on bereavement areas (see: 4.5e page 111). This shows the deficiency of Government acknowledgement of the importance of bereavement issues in schools. Hare (1986) had already identified this gap when he indicated that where death is concerned, there appears to be a gap in schools.

The Government has more responsibilities to perform in schools when it comes to the learners' bereavement and the inclusion of detailed comprehensive of death program in the school curriculum. Schools must develop and infuse into the curriculum effective bereavement intervention strategies as Obiokor (1997, cited by Mallon, 1998) has written.

School Heads do empathise with the bereaved learners as this is shown by their home visits, counseling offered to the bereaved, financial help through contributions and the attendance of the funeral service.

5.1.6 Parent's Teachers Association (PTA)

Parents' questions were written both in Setswana and English to cater for those who have difficulties in any of these languages. Twenty parents' representatives participated in the study.

The study revealed that 70% of the parents indicated that their schools do not have bereavement programs (4.1f pg 113). These parents shared the same sentiment with their children who have also indicated that there are no bereavement programs in their schools.



If there is anything in place according to the learners it is not effective and adequate (4.6.1a – 4.7.3a). Parents are not comfortable with what is currently available (4.2f page 114). Parents are also not satisfied with the fact that their children are not given adequate information at schools about death that could otherwise help them to adjust to the effects of death and acquire survival skills after the death of their significant relatives (4.3.1f page 115).

The study has also shown that parents do allow their children to participate in the activities leading to the burial of the deceased (4.5f page 116). These parents do acknowledge that letting their children participate in the funeral preparations is one of the practical mechanisms that assist the bereaved to accept, adjust and smoothly sail through the grieving process..

Bereaved children are normally given bereavement guidance or emotional support to assure them that their welfare will not be affected because there are other relatives who would take care of them (4.6f figure 12 page 116). This assurance is essential following death of the immediate family because children who survive are very concerned about their own physical and social welfare. These bereaved children want to know to what extent their wellbeing will be affected. Will they have to move? Will they still sleep in their beds? Will they still attend the same school?

The study has also shown that parents do come to school to offer help when asked by the school authorities. This is appropriate because parents have to be seen to participate in the education of their children (4.7f pg 107). Parents would like to see the inclusion of detailed death related issues in the school learning programs. Apart from this inclusion, parents would also like their children to be provided with bereavement guidance and counseling services to help them adjust to the effects of death. Over and above the parents representatives would like a full and binding parental bereavement participation policy. This generally calls for a comprehensive bereavement intervention strategy.

5.2 SECTION A:

STUDENTS' RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provide emotional support.
- Religious leaders have to be invited to schools to console the bereaved.
- Allow students are to attend the funeral service.
- Conduct memorial services upon the death of a student or staff member.
- Provision of guidance and counseling services.
- Provision of extra academic support.
- Introduction of a comprehensive death topic in various school subjects.
- Formation of bereavement clubs in schools.
- Students needs to be given time to be alone to reflect what has happened.

5.2.1 SECTION B

CLASS TEACHERS' RECOMMENDATIONS

- Contribute money to assist at the bereaved home
- Attend the funeral
- Provide transport for teachers to attend the funeral service
- Hold memorial services
- Transport students to attend the funeral service
- Prayer services to be held in school
- Companies supplying schools with food and other commodities should assist with food
- Chairs should be borrowed to the bereaved home if the deceased is the student in that particular
- school
- Students are accorded chance to sing at the funeral service.

5.2.2 SECTION C: SCHOOL COUNSELLORS' RECOMMENDATIONS

- Provision of guidance and counseling to the bereaved children.
- Refer the seriously affected bereaved learners to the specialist professionals.
- Advise the bereaved to enroll in the Government orphan care program so as to get food, clothes and money from the relevant department of Government.
- Help the child to overcome feelings experienced as a result of the death of a significant one.
- Provide some life skills to the child with information from relevant literature.
- Encourage other students to provide support to the bereaved students.
- Notify education authorities about students who have lost a significant one when about to write the final external examination as this could create a second chance for the students to repeat the grade.
- Train teachers in the bereavement related areas.
- Infuse death related topics into the curriculum.

5.2.3 SECTION D:

SCHOOL MANAGERS

- Schools should make trips to the bereaved homes.
- Both students and the staff members should attend funeral services of students or students' relatives.

- Both the students and staff members should be encouraged to make financial contributions towards the bereaved learners.
- Guidance & counseling services must be provided to the bereaved.
- Training of teachers in the area of death and bereavement.
- Inclusion of death topic in the curriculum.
- Schools should have a comprehensive written policy on bereavement.

5.2.4 SECTION E:

PARENTS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- Trauma counseling services to be offered to the learners.
- Memorial services held.
- School representatives should be sent to the bereaved family.
- Students and teachers need to contribute money to assist the bereaved family.
- Bereaved students must be given academic cover work upon their return to school.

5.3 OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1 According to (Worden 1996), there are four major tasks that an individual must accomplish before successfully concluding the grieving process:

- (a) Accepting the reality of the loss.
- (b) Experiencing the pain of grief.
- (c) Adjusting to the environment in which the deceased no longer exist.
- (d) Withdrawing emotional energy and reinvesting it in another relationship.

These four processes can be linked to the intervention strategies discussed by Rando (1984) and Worden (1996) in (2.5.6 page57-58).

5.3.2 An individual experiencing bereavement might exhibit certain behaviour. It is important for the counsellor of the bereaved to understand the wide range of behaviours under normal grief so that they will not regard the behaviour abnormal (pathological behaviour) that should be recognised as normal.

5.3.3 School counsellors and parents should appreciate and be knowledgeable of different factors that influence children' grieving processes and behaviour. The knowledge of these factors would enable the schools and parents to provide relevant and suitable therapy to the bereaved learners.

(a) Type of death. How a person dies can influence how the child grieves (was the death due to natural causes, Suicide or Homicide. Sudden death regardless of whether it was due to natural courses, accident, suicide or homicide is more difficult to grieve than death in which there was some prior warning that death is eminent.

(b) The relationship of the deceased and the child. The closeness of the relationship, the warmth and the frequency of the interaction between the deceased and the child will determine the nature of the child's response to the death. So, if the counsellors are aware of this relationship they would provide suitable and relevant therapy to the bereaved learners.

(c) The child's personality and development level. The child's gender and age, how well he/she handles anxiety and stress situations will affect the child's response to the death. This will equally enable the counsellors and parents to offer suitable assistance (Staudacher 1987).

(d) Cultural, social and ethnic variables. This impacts on how the child experiences a loss. It is essential to understand methods for coping with loss and the expression of

feelings, which are acceptable within the child's particular community and family. For example is loud crying allowed in the child's culture? So, the counsellor should appreciate this and treat the child appropriately (Staudacher 1987).

(e) Opportunities provided for the child. The opportunities provided for the child to process the grief, including the clarity of information given and the degree of participation in rituals are important in helping the child to accomplish the grieving process (Staudacher 1987). The child's therapist must ensure that this opportunity is given to the bereaved child.

5.3.7 Schools should have regular groups for children who have suffered loss. The groups give the children the opportunity to work through their grief in a safe place with an adult skilled in responding to all their emotions (Masterman and Reams (1986, cited in Mallon, 1998). **5.3.4** The bereaved children should be allowed to attend the funeral and the parents should appreciate the benefits the children gained from attending the funeral (Staudacher 1987).

5.3.5 It is important and beneficial to the bereaved child to be allowed to participate in the necessary customs and funeral ceremonies. This will help him or her to be less anxious and frightened as he or she moves along the grief process (Staudacher 1987).

5.3.6 Schools need trained counsellors who have time and facilities to help the grieving children (Worden 1996).

This study concurs with Rando (1984) and Worden (1996) (2.5.6 page 58-59) who are of the view that as part of intervention strategies, children should be given sufficient information about the death. Fears and anxieties should be attended to, reassuring the children that they will be cared for. Involving and including them in the planning of the funeral, attending the wake and the funeral service. This makes them feel important and helps them in their grieving process.

5.3.8 Schools should be a major source of support in offering routine, predictability and a different environment for the bereaved children.

5.3.9 Schools, supported by the Ministry of Education, should have a comprehensive and well defined written bereavement intervention programs for children.

5.4 If the schools bereavement policy is to be comprehensive and effective, it has to have the following components:

Formation of bereavement committees with parents as members as well.

Guidance and Counselling must be provided by the trained school guidance counselling educators to the bereaved learners before the funeral, after the funeral and for as long as the learners are still at school. This bereavement counselling is provided to offer academic, emotional, social and physical helps to the bereaved learners. Fund raising activities should be one way of raising funds for the sustainability of the program. The funds can be raised through activities such as sponsored walks, asking for financial donations from the business people and raising money through concert School community (Learners, teachers and administrative staff of the schools) should attend mourning prayers and funeral services. The arrangement could be that the services are held collectively for the affected learners every time at the end of the school academic term.

5.4.1. Schools should offer material help such as chairs and transport to the bereaved families. A record of the issued furniture should be properly kept. The concerned family should pay for any lost or damaged item.

5.4.2 The bereaved children should be exempted from paying school development funds and any other levy only if the deceased was the caregiver or custodian of the bereaved child.

5.4.3 The topic of death and bereavement should be included in the curriculum. The inclusion of death topic as a learning subject could include aspects such as grieving, mourning, hospital visit, visiting mortuaries, attending funeral services, bereavement intervention strategies, life skills after significant death, understanding the aspects of death, grief counselling.

5.4.4 Students' religious beliefs should be considered and should be used as a tool to assist the bereaved learners to understand and accept death.

5.4.5 Ministry of education is called upon to infuse a death and bereavement related topics in Teacher Training Institutions curriculum as part of preinservice requirements in order to fully prepare educators to handle bereavement issues. Educators who are already in the service should either be intensively workshopped or sent for further studies in the area of death, grief, mourning and bereavement intervention strategies.

5.4.6 Schools must be prepared for the fact that some learners will not be able to face returning to school following bereavement. Learners may not feel equal to the task of learning and may either opt out or, if they do arrive they may be a disturbing influence. So care givers should watch out for this.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The study was done in the five Senior Secondary Schools south east of Botswana. There were 320 students who received the questionnaires but only 310 returned the answered questionnaires. Only final year students were used in the study because they had relatively longer period in school and were assumed to have had bereavement experience.

Majority of learners (61%) do not get adequate bereavement help. The study has shown that the topic of death and bereavement has not been adequately included in the schools curriculum, this means that the learners are not given sufficient skills and knowledge about death and survival skills after the loss of the significant one through death. Many

school learners are calling for the inclusion of death in the curriculum. Learners are not satisfied with the entire bereavement programs if there is any in schools as they are not fully focused on to the assistance of the students, especially bereaved learners. Learners are calling for emotional support, formation of bereavement clubs in schools, provision of extra academic help to bereaved learners who have missed lessons when they had gone to attend a funeral of the significant one. Learners call for the provision of bereavement counseling as well as the invitation of religious leaders to schools to console the bereaved.

Death is a traumatic experience to children and adults alike. But given that the children do not have the experience, understanding and general coping mechanisms like adults, they need more help than adults to deal with the grief. The loss of a loved one is a tragedy unequalled by any other for most bereaved people. Schools should be a major source of support in offering routine, predictability and a different environment for a child who has had the world of home knocked from under his feet. The school may be considered the child's first line of defence, the teachers his closest allies.

The study has revealed that there are some post bereavement psychological and physical effects in the bereaved learners that need to be taken care of (WynneJones 1997). These are some of them:

- Day dreaming.
- Trouble completing assignments.
- Inability to concentrate.
- Decreased reading comprehension.
- Difficulty following directions.
- Procrastination.
- Acting younger than chronological age.
- Inability to form or maintain friendship.
- Impulsive, risk-taking behaviour.

Truancy and disruptive behaviour are both cries for help, expressing a longing for the security of an unbroken home (WynneJones 1997). School life goes some way to supplying those needs, especially where teachers are alert to unusual behaviour and its reasons. Punishment is not the answer, but while discipline must be maintained, it must be tempered by insight and understanding. Some of these unusual behaviours are similar to Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) behaviours that the caregiver should always be alert of. Some of these behaviours can be explained by the simple fact that grieving takes energy.

The child may require more sleep than before. Activities that previously came easily, like playing with friends or doing homework, are now burdens on limited energy resources. A mind that is preoccupied with thoughts of a dead loved one is being drained of its ability to concentrate and organise. A child who is angry over death may act out that anger by procrastinating or losing things. Seeking some kind of security, many children regress to behaviour of an earlier age (WynneJones 1997).

Schools are to some extent trying to offer help to the bereaved learners such as:

- Contributing money to assist at the bereaved home.
- Funeral attendance.
- Holding memorial services.
- Transporting learners to attend the funeral service (See 4.12b).
- Offer the bereaved learners information about survival skills (see 4.7c).

Educational leadership is responsible for an eco-system that permeates every aspect of a child's experience within that school. The experience of bereavement extends far beyond the school gates, so the eco-system must link the school to the child's whole community. Managers are crucial in creating the training opportunities, sense of priority, and atmosphere of support, time and money resources where necessary. One example that the school managers could use their influences is to organise a bereavement school based workshop to sensitise and equip teachers with bereavement skills.

In contemplation of evidence provided by data in this study about the insufficient bereavement strategies in the curriculum of the sampled schools, the following literary directives are adopted by this study: (Crossley in Reid, 2001 Page 63), (Goleman, 1995 in Reid, 200 Page 63), (Brown, 1997 Page 63), (Cole in Brown, 1997 Page 64), (Brown, 1999 Page 64) (Maslow, 1954 Page 65).

The study has also revealed that a significant number of teachers including administrators have not paid sufficient attention to bereavement strategies that could help learners in schools. The Ministry is urged to equip the educators with the relevant training (both pre and in-service training). Schools lack bereavement written policies for the learners and the study has shown the need for such policy. Despite the fact that the Ministry of Education is accused for not doing enough to introduce bereaved learner friendly programs, the Ministry believes that the current school programs in place: (guidance programs, pastoral programs, school fees exemption policy, Parent Teacher Association etc) are adequate to promote the general welfare of the learners including the bereaved learners.

Many studies have shown the significance of the inclusion of bereavement and intervention strategies in the school curriculum (Mallon 1998). Almost all the participants in this study have advocated for this support. There is a serious need for the Government to consider this call. The ministry of education should spearhead this demand. Many teachers usually put more emphasis on the academic attainment irrespective of the child emotional circumstances. Allan(1998, cited by Mellon by 1998) has advised that grieving is much better carried out immediately after the event rather than being postponed. The child can always undertake the educational tasks later when he/she can concentrate, because he/she may never gain full psychological wellbeing if he/she can not grieve successfully at his/her own pace or if he/she can not mourn directly at the time he/she needs to mourn (Mallon 1998). The proper completion of the grieving process will depend on the institutional bereavement intervention strategy in place (Mallon 1998).

Parents are calling for a fully detailed death related topics topic and related issues across the curriculum, effective guidance and counseling services in schools as well as a written bereavement intervention strategies policy. Parents are for the wide spectrum of both emotional material support to the bereaved learners together with the involvement of parents and teachers in the endeavour.

A special sensitivity and awareness is necessary when the child is being told of the loved one's death.. The adaptive recovery from the death of a loved one improves social and cognitive resources, self- esteem and health of the child (Rask 2001).

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STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE CODE: 4A:APPENDIX 1

**QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS ON THE INCLUSION OF DEATH TOPIC
IN THE CURRICULUM AND BEREAVEMENT INTERVENTION
STRATEGIES IN SCHOOLS.**

INSTRUCTIONS

- ❖ Please complete the form on your own.
- ❖ Please attempt all questions

PART A: Code 4A

GENERAL INFORMATION

4.1A. School _____

Tick appropriate Box

4.2A. Gender Male Female 4.3A. Form _____

4.3.1 PART B. DIRECTION: Put a tick in the column of your choice

KEY: Agree = A Disagree = D Never = N Yes = Y No = No

Always= Al Sometimes= St Strongly Agree =SA

Strongly Disagree =SD

4.4A.	Have you lost a parent or a close relative since attending at this school	Yes	No		
4.5A.	I have received both academic and emotional help from school after the death of my relative.	Yes	No	St	
4.6A	Below are some of the assistance I have witnessed offered to those who lost parents or relatives in school.				
4.6.1A.	Condolences in the form of money.	Yes	No		
4.6.2A.	Being provided with school furniture like chairs, tables, cooking utensils to use in funeral preparations	Yes	No		
4.6.3A.	Memorial services are held to remember the deceased student at school	Yes	No	St	
4.6.4A.	School transport is offered/given to the bereaved families.	Yes	No	St	
4.6.5A	Students and teachers attended the funeral.	Yes	No	St	
4.6.6.A.	There is a spokesperson/school representative at the funeral.	Yes	No	St	
4. 6.7.A	Counseling is given to the student whose parent/relative has passed away.	Yes	No	St	
4.6.8A	Extra lessons are given to the bereaved student after the funeral of the significant one (because the student has been absent from school for some day to attend the funeral)	Yes	No	St	
4.6.9A	Students are given an opportunity to sing at the funeral.	Yes	No	St	
4.7					
4.7.1A	Has the topic of death and bereavement been included in any of your learning subject?	SA	A	D	SD

	4.7.2A Do you believe that the topic of death should be taught in all the subjects in Botswana schools	SA	A	D	SD
4.8	How do the students and classmates help the bereaved child before and after the funeral?				
	4.8.1A They give moral support.	SA	A	D	SD
	4.8.2 A They give no support of any kind.	SA	A	D	SD
	4.8.3A They give social support.	SA	A	D	SD
	4.8.4A They give academic support.	SA	A	D	SD
4.9.	How should your school help the entire students population in school to understand and accept the occurrence of death?				
	4.9.1A Discuss death and its effects in class.	SA	A	D	SD
	4.9.2A Invite religious leaders and other professionals to come and address students about death and related issues.	SA	A	D	SD
	4.9.3A Allow students to see the corpse during the funeral service.	SA	A	D	SD
	4.9.4A Discuss death topics in various subjects.	SA	A	D	SD
	4.9.5A Involve students to participate in the funeral preparations of the schoolmate or classmate	SA	A	D	SD
10.	As a student, would you like to participate, attend and see the dead body of your parent, relative or colleague before and during the funeral?	SA	A	D	SD
11	Do you have programs(intervention strategies) in school that aim at helping grieving students to cope with the death of their significant ones	SA	A	D	SD
12	Do your parents or teachers allow you to attend funeral services of your close friend, classmates or other significant ones	Yes	No	St	N

13	Are you satisfied with the bereavement intervention strategies in you school?	SA	A	D	SD
14	In your opinion do the religions have a role to play in helping the bereaved to accept reality of death	A	D	St	

15. What do you think should be done in your school to improve bereavement intervention strategies for students?

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CLASS TEACHER CODE: 4B : APPENDIX 2

NAME OF THE SCHOOL _____

PART A

4.1b. Years of teaching _____ Years having been a class teacher _____

\Years of teaching in this school _____

PART B (Code 4B)

4.2b. Have you ever experienced a bereaved child in this school for the last two years? (in this context bereavement means losing, by death, either a parent, relative or another friend very close to your student.)

Yes _____ No _____

4. 3b. Which best describes your school's approach to child bereavement?

A formal procedure _____

As each situation arises _____

4.4b. Do you usually discuss the topic of death in class with your pupils?

Yes _____ No _____

4.5b. Have you ever received any bereavement training?

Yes _____ No _____

4.6b. Do you have students' bereavement intervention strategies in this school?

Yes _____ No _____

4.7b. Should death topic be included in the curriculum across the subjects in both Government and private schools?

Yes _____ No _____

4.8b. Please rate the following people in relation to how important you consider they are in connection with helping the bereaved child. Please indicate your answer by cycling the number.

1= unimportant 2= of some importance 3= very important

Guidance Teacher	1	2	3
School Administration	1	2	3
Parents	1	2	3
Class Teacher	1	2	3
Others (please specify) if any.			
_____	1	2	3
_____	1	2	3

4.9b. Have you noticed any possible post-bereavement psychological or physical effects in the child?

Yes _____

No _____

4.10b. If 'yes' please state any behaviour you have seen displayed by the learners

4.11b. Do teachers need some form of specialized training to handle bereaved children?

Yes _____

No _____

4.12b. What role does your school play during the funeral service of the student or Student's relative?

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHER COUNSELORS- CODE: 4C : APPENDIX C

NAME OF SCHOOL _____

4.1c As a school counselor do you have a written policy, which deals with students and teachers bereavement in this school?

Yes _____ No _____

4.2c. Is the '*death and bereavement*' topics included in the school curriculum?

Yes _____ No _____

4.3c. If the answer to question 2 is yes are these topics covered in details such that they equip students with the knowledge of death?

Yes _____ No _____

4.4c. Have you gone through some bereavement training to equip you to deal with bereavement issues in school?

Yes _____ No _____

4.5c Teachers should be trained to give them the skills of handling students who are grieving and mourning the death of significant one.

Yes _____ No _____

4. 6c.The death of child's parents has profound psychological effects, which negatively impact the child academic performance.

Yes _____ No _____

4.7c.How do you offer support to the bereaved students when they return to school after their parents' funeral?

4.8c. Have you ever organized a workshop to resource staff on the matter concerning death and bereavement?

Yes _____ No _____

4.9c.During bereavement counseling, do you consider the student's religious orientation as a source to use to help the student to accept death?

Yes _____ No _____

4.10c. Do you think the bereavement support children get from various organisations is adequate?

Yes _____ No _____

4.11c. Do you ever engage/involve-bereaved students in any activities during the counseling process?

Yes _____ No _____

4.12c. Does the school have any established avenue of support for bereaved learners and opens communication within schools?

Yes _____ No _____

4.13c. Do you accompany your students to the funeral service of their significant one in your capacity as a counselor?

Quiet often _____ Always _____ Rarely _____ Never _____

4.14c. As Guidance and counseling teacher what type of assistance do you normally offer the bereaved child?

PASTORAL CARE OFFICE CODE: 4D APPENDIX D

NAME OF SCHOOL _____

4.1d. Do you have teachers trained in the area of bereavement?

Yes _____ No _____

4.2d. Teachers should be trained to handle the issues of death and bereavements?

Agree _____ Disagree _____

4.3d. Death has psychological and Educational effect on students

Strongly Agree _____ Agree _____ Strongly Disagree _____ Disagree _____

4.4d. There are supporting measures in place to assist students returning to school after the death of a relative

Yes _____ No _____

4.5d Students are normally involved in the funeral preparations of their school-mate/class mate.

Yes _____ No _____

4.6d. Death as a topic should be infused/included in the school curriculum across the subjects.

Yes _____ No _____

4.7d. The Ministry of Education adequately assists the bereaved students in schools

Yes _____ No _____

4.8d Is there any key figure in school whom the bereaved children can relate or refer to for assistance?

Strongly Agree _____ Strongly Disagree _____

4.9d .In your opinion do schools need a written policy, which specifically deals with children bereavement

Yes _____ No _____

SCHOOL HEAD/DEPUTY: CODE: 4E APPENDIX E

NAME OF SCHOOL _____

4.1e. How often does this school experience students losing parents/ relative through death?

Monthly _____

Three month average _____

Six month Average _____

Once a year _____

.2e. Does the school have a policy catering for those children who lose parents or relative through death?

Yes _____

No _____

4.3e What type of assistance does your school offer the bereaved learners?

4.4e. How are staff members and students notified/inform about the death of the Student/teacher or the parent of the student?

4.5e. Is there provision in the school budget to train or workshop teachers on bereavement related issues?

Yes _____ No _____ Sometimes _____

4.6e Do you recommend for specialist training in bereavement in the school?

Yes _____ No _____

4.7e. What is the input of the education ministry as far as students' bereavement is Concerned?

8. Parents should participate in the bereavement counseling of the students in the school

Yes _____ No _____

PARENTS TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (P.T.A.) CODE: 4F APPENDIX F

Here the questions were written both in Setswana and English to cater for those who do not understand English or Setswana.

4.1f Is there a bereavement policy in the school your child attend that caters for the bereaved children? (A gona le thulaganyo kana lenanae mo sekolong sa ngwana wa gago le le itebagantseng le go thusa ba ba tlhokafaletsweng ke masika le ditsala?)

Responses	Moshupa Sch	Seepapitso Sch	Lobatse Sec	Moeding	Kagiso Sec
No					
Yes					

4.2f If there is such policy, how does it assist the bereaved children(Fa ele gore go na le thugaganyo ya go thusa ba ba tlhokafaletsweng, thulaganyo e e ba thusa jang?)

4.3f Has the death topic been included in the school curriculum? (A lenaneo la dithuto le akareditse dithuto tsa loso le ditla morago tsa lone?)

Yes _____ No _____

4.3.1f What is your comment on the above question.? (Kakgelo ya gago ke eng ka potso e e fa godimo?)

4.4f Do you allow your children (secondary school age children) to attend the funeral service. (A o na le gone go fa ngwana wa gago sebaka sa go tsenelela phitlho ya mongwe yo o tlhokafetseng?).

Yes _____ No _____ Sometime _____

4.5f Do you allow your children to participate in all the funeral arrangement and other activities leading to the burial of their relative or friend? (A ka gale o letlelela ngwana wa gago go nna le seabe mo dipaakanyong tsa phitlho le gone go tsaya karolo mo dithulaganyong tsa phitlho ya losika kana tsala ya gagwe?).

Yes _____ No _____ Sometime _____

4.6f Do the bereaved child given some form of guidance or emotional support to assure him/her that his/her welfare will not greatly affected (A go na le ka fa batsadi ba a tleng ba gomotse le go tshepisa ngwana yo o tlhokafaletseng gore o babalesegile le gore o tsile go tlhokomelesega?)

Strongly Agree _____

Strongly Disagree _____

Sometimes _____

4.7f How often do parents come to school to address, guide and comfort the children in times of peace, grief or tragedy? (Ke makgeto a le kae, a batsadi ba etelang sekolo go bua le bana , go ba gomotsa, go ba kaela tsela le go ba kgothatsa? Mo dinakong tsa boitumelo le khutsafalo?)

Always _____ Never _____ Rarely _____ Sometimes _____

4.8f If as a parent you were to suggest school bereavement intervention strategies, which aspects would you take into considerations? (Fa one o ka fiwa sebaka sa go tswa ka megopolo kana maano a go thusa bana ba ba latlhegetsweng ke masika le ditsala mo sekoleng, o ne o ka tswa ka dintlha dife tsa konokono?)

4.8f If as a parent you were to suggest school bereavement intervention strategies, which aspects would you take into considerations? (Fa one o ka fiwa sebaka sa go tswa ka megopolo kana maano a go thusa bana ba ba latlhegetsweng ke masika le ditsala mo sekoleng, o ne o ka tswa ka dintlha dife tsa konokono?)

TELEPHONE: 3655400
TELEX: 2944 THUTO BD
FAX: 351624/3655408



REFERENCE: E 11/17/XXXIX (90)

REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
PRIVATE BAG 005
GABORONE
BOTSWANA

20 March 2007

To: Basupang Sephetsolo
Diratsane Secondary School
Bag 9
Moshupa

RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

We acknowledge receipt of your application to conduct research that will:

- *To determine whether senior schools in the South East of Botswana have the topic of death in the curriculum.*
- *To investigate the depth of bereavement contents covered by schools curriculum.*
- *How do bereavement Intervention strategies assist the bereaved learners.*

You are granted permission to conduct your research entitled:

THE CONTENT OF BEREAVEMENT SECTION OF SCHOOL CURRICULUM; A CASE STUDY OF BEREAVING INTERVENTION STRATEGIES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS SOUTH EAST OF BOTSWANA.

This permit is valid until 30 December 2007 You are reminded to submit a copy of your final report to the Ministry of Education, Botswana

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M.L. Phiri'.

M.L. Phiri

For /Permanent Secretary

4 October 2006

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Dear Sir/Madam

INTRODUCING A MASTER'S RESEARCH STUDENT

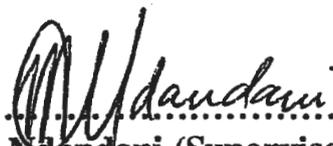
Mr SEPHETSOLO, B. S. is Master's degree student in the Faculty of Education at the North-West University (Mafikeng Campus) for 2006/7 academic year. His student number is 10607838.

This letter serves to request permission on his behalf to conduct research on a topic entitled: *The content of bereavement section of school curriculum: A case study of bereavement intervention strategies for senior secondary school learners in South East Botswana.*

Please afford him all the help he needs to conduct this research, as he is due to complete this degree programme by the first quarter of 2007.

Yours sincerely

Signed:


.....
M. Ndandani (Supervisor)



Diratsame Community junior Secondary School
Private Bag 009
Moshupa

10 September 2006

Go Motsadi

Mabapi le kopo ya ngwana go mo dirisa mo dipatlisong

Ka boikokobetso ke kopa go dirisa ngwana wa gago mo dipatlisong tse ke ikaelelang go di dira. Dipatlisiso tse, di itebagantse le thuto, mo goraya gore maduo o tsone ga a tle go solegela ngwana fela mme a tsile go akola ke bana botlhe mo dikoleng.

Dipatlisiso tse di dirwa ele bontlha bongwe jwa dithuto tsa di-masters mo mohameng wa bokaedi le bogakolodi mo Mmadikole wa Bokoni Bophirima mo Aferika Borwa.

Botlhoka jwa dipatlisiso tse ke

- Go itebeganya le go fa bahutsafadi ba baithuti bokgoni jwa go lepalepana le dikgwetlho tsa lesō mo sekoleng le kwa gae.
- Dipatlisiso tse e tla nna tshimolodiso ya go akaretsa dithuto tsa loso le khutsafalo mo baithuteng ele karolo ya dithuto kakaretso tsa dikole.

Dipatlisiso di a go dirwa magareng a Lwetsi le Motsheganong 2006, mme phetolo ya batsadi e tle reediwa mo phutegong e batsadi ba tlaa bong ba tsile go tseela bana modung o bone. Fa ke seo batsadi ba ka fa moruta bana wa dithuto tsa bokaedi le bogakolodi phetolo.

Ke lebogela kemonokeng ya lona segolo bogolo fa go tla mo go tse di amanang le dithuto tsa bana.

Kele
Kaboikokobetso

Basupang Sephetsolo

Diratsame Community junior Secondary School
Private Bag 009
Moshupa

10 September 2006

Dear Parent

Re: A request to use the child in the study

I am humbly requesting to use your child in the study I am intending to conduct. The study is educationally based, and is aimed at benefiting not only the child concerned but the entire children in schools.

This study is done by me as part of Masters Education degree course in Guidance and Counselling at North West University (Mafikeng branch) in the North West Province of South Africa

The title of the study is:

The content of bereavement section of school curriculum a study of bereavement intervention strategies for Senior Secondary School learners south –east Botswana.

The study is significance in the sense that:

- It calls for a focus on empowering bereaved learners to cope with death in the school and their respective families.
- The study will pioneer the inclusion of death and bereavement in the families of learners as components of school curriculum.

This study has to be carried between September and November 2006 and the responses of the parents will be heard during the end of term parent consultation meetings in their respective schools or otherwise school counselors will represent me if I am not in.

I appreciate your regular support especially in the matter that affect the education and welfare of your children.

Yours faithfully

Basupang Sephetsolo

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

This serves to certify that I have proof read and edited Mr. Basupang Sephetsolo' Dissertation for the degree of Master of Education.

Thank you.

Mr. Seane Keboetswe BA(Hons), DSE, MA(Lit)
Department of English
Molepolole College of Education
Private Bag 008
Molepolole
Botswana. Mobile: 72510822.

S/Seane Keboetswe
13/06/07

