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Playing to heal: The impact of bereavement camp for children with grief.

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Abstract

Child bereavement is a difficult topic to explore and study because of stigmas in discussing death, and because of restrictions in doing research with young children. Thus, research in childhood bereavement is limited. This study focused on children who attended a bereavement camp after the traumatic loss of a loved one. The purpose was to understand the participants' grief experiences. This research study used phenomenological inquiry and analysis methodology. Five female participants were interviewed for this study. In addition, participants created a sandtray world to convey their experiences at bereavement camp. The essence of participants' experiences as revealed through verbal interviews was posttraumatic growth. In addition, the essence of participants' experiences as revealed through their sandtray worlds was gaining a sense of support. Results of this study extend bereavement research to include the experiences of children. Further, implications for mental health professionals, counselor educators, and bereavement camps are emphasized.

Keywords: children, sandtray, bereavement camp, child centered play therapy, grief

Playing to heal: The impact of bereavement camp for children with grief

Although resilient, children are not immune to experiencing the painful impact that the death of a loved one can trigger. In some instances, the initial shock of death impedes a child's ability to grieve (Bugge et al., 2014). Additionally, some children may experience the death of a loved one as result of a traumatic event such as a murder or natural disaster. These children may then begin to re-experience the traumatic aspects of the death, have intrusive nightmares, avoid visiting places they spent with their loved one, or become unable to recall happy memories with their loved one.

The literature highlights that as children develop in cognitive abilities, their perception and reaction to death may change several times (Panagiotaki et al., 2018). However, there is a lack in understanding of children's' experiences of loss and what they find to be helpful in their grieving process. The death of a loved one is a common reason why people seek counseling services (Worden, 2018). Further, bereavement camps can be an appropriate place for children to begin processing their losses. The experiences of children who attend a bereavement camp to cope with the death of a loved one are unknown, however. This study was designed to explore and describe the experiences of children who attended a bereavement camp that uses grief-based interventions, over the course of 3 days, to help children heal.

Literature Review

In the event of a trauma or a loss, post-traumatic play is most appropriate to use with children to help process the event. Post-traumatic play is unique in the toys chosen and the repeated and unconscious re-enacting of the trauma in an effort to self-soothe (Cohen et al., 2010). For example, children may use rescue vehicles and medical kits to play out their versions of the death scene. Additionally, depending on the nature of death, play therapists can equip the playroom with relevant props for children who are impacted by disasters such

as a plane crash, flood, tornado, hurricane, or war. In post-traumatic play, children often fantasize a reunion and recreate the intact family (Prichard, 2016). Allowing children to use puppets or stuffed animals as distancing objects helps them manage traumatic reminders and gives them an opportunity to relive the last memory of the person who died (Hartwig, 2014). Symbolic play allows counselors to view what a child understands and thinks about the death, and it gives counselors an opportunity to intervene appropriately (Webb, 2010).

Play and Child Development

Closely related to the notion that play is therapeutic for children, play is a crucial part of child development (Frost et al., 2012). It is a natural form of expression. As children mature and develop, so does their form for play. For example, as infants children play peekaboo; as toddlers, they play patty-cake; as school-aged children they play recreational sports, and so on. Each of these methods for play provides individuals with an opportunity to learn about social interaction and express a variety of emotions. Further, scholars and researchers suggest that play is connected to development, emotions, motivation, cognition, socialization, culture, and learning (Frost et al., 2012).

Opportunities for play are critical for children who experience disasters. Researchers of major disasters discovered that children often seek opportunities to express themselves using play and creative arts (Peek et al., 2018). Children play in an effort to adapt to their present and future needs (Frost, 2005). Further, it is suggested that certain activities can promote healing in children who have experienced disaster and trauma (Frost, 2005). To promote healing, Frost (2005) recommends that children play and work in natural play areas and play grounds; create play from sand, water, and scrap material; encourage and provide for creative arts- dance, drama, music, storytelling, drawing, and painting; and encourage children to create their own stories, poems, and plays, and help them to make their own props for dramatic activities (p. 7).

As previously mentioned, play therapy is one possible intervention for children experiencing loss. The playroom can be a safe environment for children to express emotion and develop an understanding of their feelings. In addition, group play therapy can be an effective intervention for children experiencing a loss (Sweeney et al., 2014). Groups provide children with an opportunity to share their experiences and feelings with others who have similar stories. Group leaders create a safe place for children to remember, share, express hurt, and begin healing (Cheng & Ray, 2016). Researchers suggest that when children participate in groups, they feel less different from others, and their experiences can be validated (Cheng & Ray, 2016). In group, children can use play, artwork, and sand to engage with other members without needing to use any words. Additionally, these mediums give children an opportunity to share their finished product with a counselor to process grief.

Sandtray

As anyone can imagine, play and artwork can serve to tell a story. Similar to using art in play, *sandtray* (Lowenfeld, 1979) is also a method for narration in which the storyline allows children to communicate their emotions and thoughts to the counselor (Lu et al., 2010). Sandtray therapy is a child-centered technique created by Lowenfeld (1979). Also known as “The World Technique”, this child-centered approach consists of a tray of sand, water to be added into the sandtray, if so decided by the client, and miniatures of various items for the client to create an imaginative and symbolic world in the sandtray to reflect the inner experiences of the client (Lowenfeld, 1979). The sandtray is standardized at approximately 75 cm x 50 cm x 7 cm and painted blue to create an image of sky or water that contains the sand (Hutton, 2004). A tray that is too small can quickly be filled and overwhelm a child who has been traumatized, and thus should be avoided (Mattson & Veldorale-Brogan, 2010).

Sandtray is a form of active imagination whereby the counselor allows the child to

spontaneously create their internal world in an external setting (Bradway & McCoard, 1997). The counselor using sandtray with children should be accepting and nondirective (Turner, 2005). They should also be knowledgeable about the symbolic meanings behind the displays in the sand, but should not interpret the images for the child (Kalff, 1991). Using an assortment of miniatures, children create scenes such as a battlefield, cemetery, and sand sculptures. The burying theme is often seen in sandtray of children who are grieving (Green & Connolly, 2009). It metaphorically allows children to play out the burial of their loved one. It also allows avoidance of the painful emotion when recalling and making sense of a death (Green & Connolly, 2009).

Researchers have described several therapeutic benefits from sandtray to include that it allows children to free their creativity, perceptions, feelings, and memories (Allan & Berry, 2002; Boik & Goodwin, 2000; Goldman, 2001; Green & Ironside, 2004). Further, children are naturally drawn to play with sand as a form of expression. Sand is a natural substance recognizable across cultures and has a special connection with human beings (Henderson-Dixon, 1992). Sandtray allows children a necessary therapeutic distance from painful or traumatic events. It provides children an opportunity to: “express loss; say goodbye; allow for continued grief as it changes over time; remember, reflect, and reintegrate; feel anchored as they make the loss tangible by providing space of contact to physically touch the loss; and share their view of the situation (Green & Connolly, 2009, p. 89)”. Finally, when witnessing a child’s use of sandtray, counselors gain an understanding of the child’s phenomenological experience of grief (Fry, 2000; Preston-Dillon, 2007).

Bereavement Camps

Therapeutic camping is a helpful adjunct to treatment because it normalizes the grief experience (Webb, 2010). According to the American Camping Association (Delanski, 1991), camping helps children develop confidence, self-esteem, and teamwork strategies, all

of which may be considered qualities that have decreased for children in grief. Camping also provides children with an opportunity to process their grief in a safe and supported environment (Creed et al., 2001). Further, researchers suggest that bereavement camps decrease the childhood traumatic grief and posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms for children after a parental loss (McClatchey & Wimmer, 2013).

While the effectiveness of grief camps is emerging in the literature, researchers find it difficult to provide a definitive explanation as to why this is because there are few studies available to compare (Clute & Kobayashi, 2013). In addition, there is a need to determine outcomes for children who attend bereavement camps. Specifically, researchers call for studies that emphasize change and adaptation made after camp rather than just the presence and absence of symptoms (Stokes et al., 1997). Thompson et al. (1998) suggest that it is important to keep in contact with children after a significant loss because they are likely to experience overwhelming emotions or events that trigger memories of the deceased. Although children are well supported at bereavement camps to process feelings related to the loss of a loved one, researchers do not have much evidence to suggest how children cope with the loss after camp ends (Stokes et al., 1997). Thus, this study aimed to understand the experiences of children who attended a bereavement camp, discover any coping skills learned, and determine whether children were able to apply them to life after camp. Further, this study intended to fill the gap in literature where phenomenological data was missing.

Method

A phenomenological research design was used to explore and describe the experiences of children who attended a grief camp after a traumatic loss of a loved one. Specifically, Moustakas' (1994) phenomenological data analysis procedures were used because the researcher sought to understand the essence of individual and collective experiences of the phenomenon being studied. The process of collecting detailed information

about people and their experiences is a natural part of the counseling profession (Hays & Wood, 2011), which makes phenomenological research a good fit for counselors. They are trained to use active listening, reflection, and summarization skills when they are with their clients to understand presenting concerns (Levitt, 2002). Further, counselors aim to create a warm and supportive environment to build a trusting therapeutic relationship (Levitt, 2002). All of these counseling skills are well suited to utilize in a phenomenological study in bereavement.

IRB approval was obtained prior to the start of the study. Five children who attended a bereavement camp participated in this study. All five participants were female and from southern Texas. At the time of the interview, participants ranged in age from 7 to 12 with a mean age of 9.8. Three participants (60%) identified as Hispanic/Latina, one (20%) identified as Asian, and one (20%) identified as African American. Four (80%) participants identified their family as Catholic and one (20%) identified as Christian. Four (80%) participants identified to have experienced an additional significant or traumatic event to the death of a loved one.

Interviews

Approximately two months after camp ended, the researcher called each participant's parents to schedule an interview time to be located at the campsite. One individual interview was conducted with each study participant approximately three months after camp ended. The researcher allocated approximately thirty – sixty minutes for each interview, but she was willing to let the interview go for as long as each participant was willing to share. This timeframe was intended to be sensitive to children's limited capacity for being interviewed. Follow up questions were asked if necessary, and questions were specific to the individual participant. Interview questions included the following:

1. Tell me how come you came to camp.

2. Tell me about camp.
3. If there is anything from camp that you could do again what would it be?
4. What do you remember about that activity?
5. What was it like talking about your special person who died on the first day of camp?
What about on the last day of camp?
6. How do people feel when someone dies, and do those feelings get better?
7. If you knew a child whose family member or friend died, what could you tell them that might help?
8. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about camp?

Further, towards the end of each interview, participants were asked to use the sandtray to “create a scene that captures their experience at [bereavement camp].” The researcher processed the sandtray with each child and collected a story of each individual experience. The interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed. Consistent with a phenomenological approach, the photographs of the participants’ sandtrays were viewed openly without a research lens or focus. This allowed participants to attribute their own meaning to their experience at bereavement camp.

Trustworthiness

Before data collection began, the researcher bracketed her personal experiences and judgments regarding grief to minimize the risk of researcher bias (Atkins, 2013). This included the researcher’s personal beliefs about the world, people, and grief. The researcher also answered the same questions that she asked participants about regarding experiences of camp. The researcher answered each question from the perspective of her role as a facilitator at a previous grief camp. This served to help minimize the assumptions the researcher could have made about participant’s experiences in camp.

Credibility

To ensure that the study was credible, accurate participant identification and descriptions were needed (Atkins, 2013). All participants were given identical camp applications and evaluation forms to complete. The researcher used a semi-structured interview with predetermined questions to ensure that each participant was asked the same questions. Further, purposive sampling was used to ensure children's experiences with grief camp were adequately represented.

To ensure for triangulation of the data, multiple sources of information were used to include pre-existing data, individual interviews, and field notes. In addition, the researcher documented evolving ideas that unfolded during the research process, known as memoing (Creswell, 2012). Field notes included the researcher's reactions and observations of participant's nonverbal behaviour during interviews.

Dependability

An external auditor conducted an audit of the data collection and analysis procedures to ensure that the results were dependable (Creswell, 2013). The auditor was a Licensed Professional Counselor who was versed with the methodology but was not connected to this research project. The researcher provided the auditor with a detailed description of the steps taken to reach the conclusion of the emergent themes, along with a narrative that explained the reasons such conclusions were made. The external auditor examined whether the findings, conclusions, and interpretations were supported by the study data (Creswell, 2013). The use of an external auditor serves as a function of dependability.

Results

Each participant in this study experienced the death of a loved one within four years of attending bereavement camp. Table 1 provides pseudonyms for each participant, her age at time of the interview, her relationship to the deceased, the cause of death, and type of

memorial service each participant attended. A description of the essence of participant experiences follow Table 1, as well as sample narratives from some of participant interviews.

Table 1

Participant Information Related to the Death

Pseudonym	Age	Relationship to the Deceased	Cause of Death	Memorial Service
Rachel	12	Grandmother; GreatGrandmother	Cancer; Heart failure	Cremation; Burial
Janet	11	Brother	Homicide	Funeral
Samantha	9	Sister	Heart Failure	Burial
Sara	7	Father	Terminal Illness	Funeral
Ashley	10	Uncle	Homicide	Funeral

Individual Interviews

Together, the themes developed from participants' individual interviews reflected posttraumatic growth. Calhoun and Tedeschi (1999) define *posttraumatic growth* as "the experience of positive change that the individual experiences as a result of the struggle with a traumatic event (p. 11)". Participants expressed an increased sense of understanding about what to do with their grief and gained comfort about discussing death. For example, Janet shared, "I came to camp because I was having problems expressing my feelings about my brother when he passed. And I didn't know who to talk to and who was comfortable talking about it." Janet learned, "It helps doing things that my brother liked so that I can feel like he's still here. Sometimes I will draw or listen to the kind of music he likes or play with my dog because me and my brother used to take care of her."

Further, participants presented with maturity when they recalled their experiences at bereavement camp. They identified what was helpful for them and offered advice for other children who also experienced a loss of a loved one.

Rachel shared:

I would definitely suggest the bereavement center. I would also suggest like a meditational thing...some of the girls in my group [at camp] said meditation so I started mediation a couple weeks after bereavement [camp]. I started to shut the door and put the pillow on the floor and sit there and relax and think. I would find anything that was comfortable for me. We [also] do the rose-and-thorn. Like the thorns are the bad part of your day and the rose is the blossom of your day.

Sandtrays

The cumulative experience of participants' play experiences, as created in sandtray, was gaining a sense of support. This awareness was evidenced by participants' descriptions of, and inclusion of, miniatures in their sandtrays. All of the participants shared an interaction they had with camp staff and facilitators. Most all of the participants included adult miniatures in their sandtrays and described them as teachers from camp. These adult figures had a huge influence on participants' understanding of their grief and impacted their camp experience.

Rachel

Rachel's sandtray was very dynamic. She moved her objects frequently to reflect uncertainty. Originally, she had a little girl facing a football player to show her desire to play. She said, "I remember having a soccer ball, and this guy named ___ him and I. I would toss the ball to him and he would toss it back to me and it hit the backboard and I launched forward and I caught it! I couldn't believe it!" Rachel moved the basketball, soccer ball, and football player several times until she had them just the way she wanted.

Rachel also placed four trees in the bottom left corner to represent her time outside during camp. She placed a rock with the word "peace" on it next to a basketball, which was

next to a plastic candle. Further, she put a small tombstone below a coffin to represent the time she spent memorializing her loved one during camp. Rachel reminisced, the “coffin was when we went into the groups with the other people.” Last, Rachel added a Virgin Mary next to the coffin to represent her faith. She said, “Well, I’ll add this little thing in front of it [coffin] because I kind of like this. Because I would kind of like be by myself, and whenever I was sitting in a chair by myself, I would say a quick prayer to be safe.”

Janet

Janet attended camp in hopes of learning new ways to express her feelings after her brother died. Janet described her experience at bereavement camp as, “there were a lot of helpers and it was really fun... it’ll help you express your feelings and forget about all the pain.” Further, Janet described her grief after camp as, “still a little shy and happy and umm I guess a little bit excited.”

Janet’s sandtray was very static. She put each miniature in the sand and did not choose to rearrange them. Janet, also, did not touch the sand during her arrangement of the tray. Janet’s sandtray was “unpeopled” (Homeyer & Sweeney, 2016) and had a lot of open space. In the back-right corner was a 3-headed dragon looking directly at Courage the Cowardly Lion, standing in front of it. To the left of the lion were two rocks that said “faith” and “peace”, respectfully. Finally, a panda was arranged to look at the scene from afar. The panda represented Janet.

Janet described her sandtray:

Well the thing is supposed to be how camp felt. I kind of thought about camp and I thought how it made me feel when I came. This (points to dragon) means that it brought out all my imagination and this (points to lion) is for, well it brought back memories. And the panda is for my favorite things that we did, and the peace and faith is for, just cause. The panda is one of my favorite animals.

Samantha

Samantha's sandtray was organized on the left side of her tray. She sifted the sand through her hands and rearranged her miniatures several times during creation, as evidenced by the handprint and indentions she left in the open area of her tray. Samantha placed 3 trees in the far back left corner to represent her time spent outside during camp. To the right of the trees were an adult female and adult male figures, with a female child standing in front of them. This represented the safety and support that Samantha felt. Samantha described the 2 adult figures as "teachers" she played sports with at camp. Two rocks with the words "peace" and "faith" sat to the left of the child figure. Samantha explained that she put those rocks because it reminded her of an activity she did at camp, and she remembered learning that, "it's okay to cry." Finally, Samantha placed a soccer ball and basketball in front of a goal to signify the time she enjoyed playing.

Researcher's Perspective

In developing themes, the researcher chose not to utilize any program software. This allowed the researcher to be more flexible and comfortable in managing her data. She listened to interviews, read through transcripts, highlighted significant statements, and cut-and-pasted the significant statements onto a large poster board. She was then able to label common statements using post it notes and group the statements into common information so that themes emerged. Although this process was tedious, it was also creative and manageable.

Further, when developing themes from participant's sandtrays the researcher filtered her prior experiences of processing the subconscious with children who created sandtrays. This means that she did not interpret any of the sandtray content, but rather she focused solely on what participants created and how they described their sandtrays. Throughout the data collection and analysis process, the researcher was aware of her own grief experiences during her lifetime. She aimed to remain neutral during this process, thus she bracketed and

kept a journal of her personal experiences during research. Before the researcher met with each participant, she reviewed the camper registration form to remind herself of each participants' background and loss they had experienced.

Discussion

The central research question of this study was, "What is a child's experience of a bereavement camp after a traumatic loss of a loved one?" In addition to the central research question one sub question was, "How do children cope with a loss after attending bereavement camp?" Three themes and four subthemes were developed from participant interviews, as well as, one theme and two subthemes from participant sandtrays. These themes and subthemes summarize participants' experiences at bereavement camp and provide insight into their ability to cope with loss after bereavement camp.

The three themes developed from participant interviews were camp activities, resilience, and identify of feelings. All five participants identified enjoying the time they received to play during camp. Activities of play included painting, sandtray, making water balloons, and going on a field trip to the children's museum. Further, all five participants identified they felt better talking about their person who died towards the end of camp because they were more comfortable around other campers in comparison to on the first day of camp. Finally, all five participants were able to describe how they felt when their special person died and reported gaining a sense of relief.

The theme developed from participant sandtrays included play. All five participants created a scene in the sand of either the time they spent playing or an activity that they did at bereavement camp. They all discussed the significance of being with other participants and/or "teachers" (i.e. camp counselors and facilitators) during their play time. Thus, play had a significant impact on childrens' ability to cope with their loses and process their grief.

Limitations

The use of sandtray therapy as a data collection method was a unique aspect of this research study. The participants were able to use the sandtrays in a way to elaborate on their experiences at bereavement camp. Thus, details of their experiences were revealed in a far quicker and succinct way than if the researcher had solely utilized traditional talk interviews with participants. However, the use of sandtray therapy in phenomenological research proved to yield some limitations. For example, the researcher developed themes solely based on each participant's verbal narrative of what her sandtray meant to herself rather than from subconscious material.

In addition, many challenges exist when doing research with the child population. The primary challenges that the researcher of this study faced were participants' limited attention span and hesitation to elaborate. In preparation for such normal challenges of working with children, the researcher provided each participant an opportunity to draw a response to any of the interview questions using such items as markers, crayons, colored pencils, and construction paper. The researcher hoped that participants could provide a more in-depth response through drawing in comparison to talking. Nonetheless, all of the participants chose to verbally respond to the interview questions.

Finally, some limitations to the results exist because 1) there are very few qualitative studies on bereavement camp available for comparison of children's experiences, and 2) because this is one of the first studies to document children's experiences at a bereavement camp using sandtray. While majority of the findings aligned with prior research, the theme of *resilience* did not. This could possibly be explained by participant's hesitation to fully disclose or social desirability bias. Nonetheless, it is not uncommon for children to avoid the painful emotions they may be experiencing (Cohen et al., 2006).

Implications

Mental Health Workers

Several study participants discussed that they wanted to attend camp to learn more ways to cope with their loss. In participant's opinions, the services that they received from school counselors were not enough. This was partly due to the limited time spent with a school counselor, and partly due to participants not knowing other children in school who also experience grief. One participant especially mentioned that she was not sure *how* to speak about her loss with other people, and she was not sure *what* was appropriate to disclose. However, some study participants did mention that they found talking to a school counselor as being helpful.

Based on what participants disclosed, the researcher suggests that school counselors seek additional support for their students by referring them to an outside mental health agency and possibly a bereavement camp. Outside agencies could include individual counseling with a licensed professional counselor or a licensed clinical social worker; family therapy with a licensed marriage and family therapist; or psychological testing with a licensed psychologist. Children can benefit from first attending a bereavement camp where they can learn a wide array of coping strategies within a short span of time. Additionally, they can gain the support of other children who have also experienced loss. Then, when ready, children can begin individual counseling services to practice what they learned at camp and process the more difficult emotions that they might not have confessed to other children at camp. Or, given that grief oftentimes impacts the family system, children could immediately transition to family therapy with a licensed marriage and family therapist to establish new familial roles after the loss of a loved one.

Counselor Education

According to CACREP standards, a core responsibility of counselor educators is to facilitate a students' professional orientation and ethical practice (CACREP, 2016, F 1). This includes teaching the "multiple professional roles and functions of counselors across specialty areas" (CACREP, 2016, p. 8). Most fitting for grief, an area of specialization is the "effects of crisis, disasters, and trauma on diverse individuals across the lifespan" (CACREP, 2016, p. 10). This exemplifies the importance to prepare counseling students for grief and loss issues with their clients.

Teaching students about the experiences of children who have grief has the potential to increase their empathy for the client and inform their treatment planning. Stigmas around discussing death can make grief work uncomfortable for some counselors. However, educators could facilitate conversations about death in the classroom to help break the stigma and build students' confidence in addressing grief and loss with clients. Based on study outcomes, some recommendations for teaching points could include children's understanding of death according to their level of cognitive development and age-appropriate communication. In addition, counselor educators could teach evidence based coping strategies and interventions for children with grief with an emphasis on creative interventions.

Bereavement Camps

Overall, the participants from this study enjoyed their experience at bereavement camp. In their camper feedback forms, participants expressed how much they valued the time they had for free play and the trip to the children's museum. Consistent with previous studies, camp provided participants an opportunity to share their experiences of losing a loved one and gave them permission to grieve (Potts et al., 1999; Stokes et al., 1997; Summers, 1993). Participants also learned new ways to cope with their losses. While the goals of bereavement

camp are being met, the literature denotes a lack in communication between professional counselors and camp staff in addressing effective grief interventions (Clute & Kobayashi, 2013).

Based on outcomes of this study, the researcher suggests that bereavement camps continue to emphasize teaching practical coping strategies that children can take home with them and provide opportunities for child-directed play. Further, the researcher recommends adding more opportunities for children to build friendships that are accessible for everyone. For example, camp staff can facilitate pair work with children upon arrival to camp and then build up to group work so that they may appeal to both introverted and extroverted children, respectfully. Finally, it is recommended that children are sub-divided according to their cognitive level of development and teach varying coping strategies. For example, during group work, bereavement camp staff should incorporate verbal processing questions with the older children and provide more opportunity for child-directed play for the younger children.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand the phenomenological experiences of children who attended a bereavement camp, and to determine if they were able to cope with loss after camp ended. For the children in this study, play was a crucial part of their bereavement camp experience. Through play, children were able to make connections with other participants and memorialize their loved ones. Further, children remembered coping skills they learned at bereavement camp and were able to utilize them at home. The five participants who contributed to these results ached the loss of someone close to them. Through bereavement, however, they were resilient and showed the potential for growth to rise out of painful experiences. This research was a first step in understanding a traumatic event (death of a loved one) with a vulnerable population (children), using a methodology (sandtray) that aligned with children's patterns of communication.

It is crucial for mental health workers and bereavement camp staff to listen to children's stories, take a non-threatening approach to intervention, and guide them towards healing. Further, counselor educators can continue to teach students about children's developmental understanding of death, effective modalities, and seek opportunities to conduct research to expand on this phenomenon.

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