

Covid-19 Pandemic Crisis Response: Supporting Grieving Young People



Covid-19 has impacted our country in unprecedented ways. It seems as though everything that we once knew has changed and many have experienced hardships like never before. In essence, our nation is in a collective state of crisis as we grieve the life we once knew and took for granted. Consider these steps, modeled after the NOVA Crisis Response Training, for supporting grieving young people throughout the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Safety & Security

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs reminds us that physiological needs as well as a sense of safety and security are the foundation of our growth and development.

When these basic needs are unmet, growth in other areas becomes unlikely.

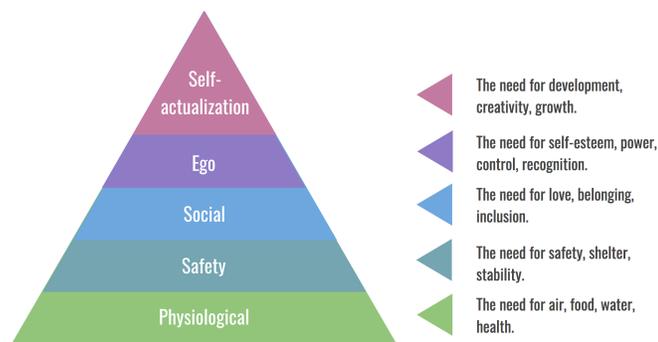
Therefore, we must first focus our attention on ensuring that individuals have access to food, shelter and a reliable income.

The Covid-19 pandemic has created not only threats to our physical health and wellness, but also to financial stability and the sense of connectivity to our support system.

How to Help

- Learn, understand and follow all recommendations set by the CDC. Young people will look to caregivers in their lives as role models on adhering to these guidelines.
- Check in with families. Ensure that they have adequate food and shelter and support in connecting to outside resources as needed.
- Become familiar with resources available in your community. Many places are offering food assistance, bill and rent forgiveness and other services that help meet basic needs.
- Focus on ways to maintain health safety of self and others. When experiencing uncertainty and chaos, focus on things we can control.
- Assess the health and safety of those caring for the child. Consider physical safety concerns related to caregivers that are first responders and health care workers .

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



Ventilation & Validation

Once young people have re-established a sense of safety and security, it is important to provide opportunities for them to share their story (ventilation) and have their reactions, emotions and thoughts validated. This reassurance will decrease anxiety and re-establish a sense of control and normalcy.

We are all in the same storm but we are not in the same boat. Each of us has experienced this pandemic differently and need an opportunity and a safe place to share our personal experiences.

How to Help

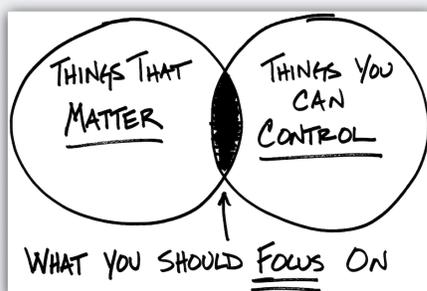
- Encourage young people to identify and stay connected with their support system.
- Provide space and opportunity for them to tell their story by asking "I wonder how this experience has affected you and your family?"
- Listen and validate emotions and reactions shared.
- Encourage healthy feelings expression.
- Acknowledge common responses to grief and crisis (i.e. changes in sleeping and eating patterns, mood instability, brain fog and the inability to focus).

Prediction & Preparation

This step in may seem like the most challenging right now. The focus on prediction helps us to consider what might happen next and make plans accordingly.

There are still so many unknowns and unanswered questions.

So in order to support our young people, we have to focus on what we do know and adjust as needed to new and changing recommendations. It is only after the immediate crisis needs are met that healing related to death loss and any other growth is likely to happen.



How to Help

- Focus on the short term. Encourage young people to consider what will happen in the next few days & weeks as there are still so many unanswered questions about the longer term future.
- Ensure children have a flexible but consistent schedule. Structure and routine increase a sense of control and understanding of what to expect which is beneficial in a time of uncertainty.
- Reassure information will be shared as it becomes available. It is ok to say "I don't know the answer to that right now."
- Help initiate conversations about details and circumstances that will be different and about those that will stay the same.
- Acknowledge these changes are challenging and you will be here to support them.



Our mission is to provide a network of trained professionals coordinated through a single system within Central Indiana to respond to the emotional and mental health needs of victims of disaster or traumatic events in a timely and planned way, including follow-up and referrals for those in need, all provided free of charge with dignity and respect for individual and cultural differences

i-cart.org | 317-596-2202 | indianacrisisresponseteam@gmail.com