

Bereaved Adolescent sibling: Reflection of Change in Perception of Self and Family from Past to Present

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Confronting death at adolescence is contrary to the development stage in which bereaved siblings find themselves, and most of their dealing with the subject is intertwined with the question of identity and self-examination. Therefore each such event can be critical in shaping their personality.

This research examined the reflection of the change in the self-conception from past to present and the family conception of adolescent bereaved siblings. The research population included 30 adolescents, aged 13 to 18, who had lost a brother or sister in sudden circumstances, a year to six years previous to their participation in the research. Participants completed the shortened version of Two-Track Bereavement Questionnaire (TTBQ1-40), Hogan Sibling Inventory of Bereavement (HSIB) and two Family Adaptation and Cohesion scales (FACES III). Sixteen bereaved siblings agreed to participate in the second half of the research and a meeting was held with them, in which they completed two versions of the "Kinetic Family Drawing Revised" (KFD-R) - one describing their family at present, and the other describing their family as they imagined that it was two years before the loss.

The main results include a) a positive concept of the relations with the deceased is related to an overall positive concept of life for the bereaved siblings; b) the more the bereaved siblings evaluate the dead brother, the more forceful expression of the trauma; c) the bereaved siblings' ability to open up to new mediums and to express themselves through family drawings is correlated with reporting personal growth following the loss; d) gender is a factor such that bereaved sisters, as expected from them in modern society, communicates the loss's influence and expression of feelings experienced following it to a greater degree than bereaved brothers.

The use of the KFD-R tool can enable professionals, school staff and the near surroundings with another alternative for evaluating and assisting the bereaved population. There is however a need for further research in order to clarify to what extent this medium is appropriate for evaluating the experience of loss amongst adolescent bereaved siblings. In addition, while the present research used the KFD-R as a quantitative measure, it may be that a qualitative evaluation would have been a more appropriate method and could have supplied information on the bereaved population.

Keywords: Bereaved siblings, adolescent, Kinetic Family Drawing Revised.

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