

BILINGUAL IN-SCHOOL GRIEF AND LOSS GROUPS

Hello! My name is Michelle and I'm the Bilingual School and Community Clinician at Uplift Center for Grieving Children. I'm happy to share Uplift's Spanish-language in-school services with you. In working with Spanish speaking students and students from Latinx cultures, it's important to Uplift that we're able to connect as best as we can, especially when working with the heavy topic of grief. Uplift believes strongly that every individual should be able to express their unique journey of grief, and we also believe that no one should ever have to go on that journey alone. I come from a Spanish-speaking background, as my family is from Ecuador. As a bilingual clinician at Uplift, it's important to me that I'm able to connect with students in a way that will increase their levels of comfort and trust, by communicating with the same language, cultural background, and values.



In the Latinx community, mental health issues are not usually spoken about. There is a stigma attached to asking for and receiving help. In addition, Latinx populations are often culturally more private and prefer to keep issues in the family. Being a Latinx woman, I grew up in a household and environment where discussing emotions and feelings outside of the family, let alone seeking outside expertise and help for those feelings, was discouraged.

The topic of grief can be very personal, but when it isn't processed, it can be left unresolved. While it can be uncomfortable and frightening to confide in people outside our family, it's important to take care of ourselves, both physically and emotionally, and allow ourselves the opportunity to process our grief in a safe space. Uplift believes it's important to share this information with students in our bilingual grief groups.

Uplift not only offers grief support services in both Spanish and English, but we're also committed to addressing bi-cultural identity in our in-school grief groups. We're aware that many youth we serve in the Latinx community are expected to "be American" at school but identify with their country of origin at home. This can be very challenging for young people who are trying to figure out who they are and how they feel comfortable fitting into society. It's important that we understand this in order to be able to connect fully with our students, especially when discussing grief and the emotions surrounding it.

Nuestra Misión:

Uplift Center for Grieving Children ayuda a los niños que lloran a la muerte a sanar y crecer a través de su dolor, al tiempo que fortalecen la comprensión de las familias, las comunidades y los profesionales sobre la mejor manera de responder a sus necesidades.

What do Spanish In-School/Virtual Grief Groups look like?

Uplift's skilled bilingual clinicians provides free grief groups to any school within the city of Philadelphia that requests one. For this to happen, a family will contact or reach out to their child's school counselor or social worker to inform them of a recent death that has impacted both the student and family.

The counselor will work on meeting the necessary needs for the grieving student, which may include joining a school-based grief group with other children. Uplift's groups are held once a week for six-weeks and follow an activity-based curriculum designed to help children learn about grief, identify and express feelings, develop healthy coping skills, process the impact of the death, and begin to make meaning from the death. Students have an opportunity to discuss their unique grief experience with peers who understand and find comfort in not being alone in their grief. All school grief groups are free to students and no insurance payment is required. Specialized grief groups for survivors of homicide and children who had someone die from a drug overdose are also available.

"Students have expressed having comfort in speaking their native language in order to process their individual grief. The cultural relevance of language has easily strengthened the process of the group dynamic. Students have felt more at ease in allowing themselves to create a safe space for their grief. Most importantly, these students have expressed they felt understood and that they felt heard!"

Reflections from a
Spanish-Language Clinician

"I feel a little bit
of home
when I am in this
group."

Reflection from a Spanish-language
Grief Group Participant

Contact Information:

For more information about Uplift's
Spanish-Speaking Grief Groups,
please contact:

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