

# School Grief Support Network Initiative

## Survey Results: Spring, 2017

Lindsay M. Lamb, Ph.D.

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In Spring 2017, [The Christi Center](#) provided 23 Austin Independent School District (AISD) students attending East Austin schools needing grief support free counseling services. AISD's Department of Research and Evaluation (DRE) helped The Christi Center administer a survey to parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, and school counselors of students receiving these services prior to their first counseling session and following their last counseling session. Raters were asked to assess participating students' emotions and behaviors over the past month at two time points: prior to, and following the counseling sessions (Table 1). This report examines ratings of participating students' emotions and behaviors before and after participating in grief counseling. Additional analyses were conducted to determine if ratings changed over time.

After the final grief counseling session, all raters believed that participating students were less sad during the past month than they were prior to receiving grief counseling (Table 1). Similarly, counselors noticed less frustration among participating students during the past month than prior to receiving grief counseling (Table 1). Parents and teachers felt that participating students were more able to use coping skills following grief counseling than they were prior to receiving grief counseling (Table 1). Finally, teachers believed that students made fewer physical complaints after participating in grief counseling compared with prior ratings (Table 1).

Table 1. Parent(s)/guardians, teachers, and school counselors believed students were less sad after receiving grief support counseling than they were before.

Thinking about this past month, how often was your student/child...†	Counselor		Parent		Teacher	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
sad?	2.78	1.90*	2.91	2.21*	2.74	1.90*
angry?	2.26	1.81	2.45	1.95	2.04	1.65
anxious?	2.48	1.95	2.68	2.05	2.50	2.10
frustrated?	2.65	2.05*	2.41	1.84	2.65	2.15
unable to concentrate?	2.74	2.33	2.45	2.06	3.09	2.50
able to express feelings about death?	2.70	3.10	2.73	3.00	2.17	2.35
able to use coping skills (such as self calming, self soothing activities, reaching out for help, etc.)?	2.91	3.48	3.00	3.63*	2.61	3.60*
<b>Thinking about this past month, how often did your student/child...††</b>						
make physical complaints (such as headaches, stomach aches, etc.)?	1.48	1.24	2.27	1.95	2.09	1.37*
have disruptions in their sleep patterns (such as ability to fall asleep, sleep through the night, nightmares, etc.)?	1.55	1.19	2.14	2.00	1.29	1.38
appear overly tired (such as falling asleep in class)?	1.52	1.43	1.41	1.63	1.81	1.26

*Source.* School Grief Network survey collected before counseling began (pre) and after the final session (post)  
*Note.* † response options ranged from never (1) to very often (5), †† response options ranged and from 1 (1-2 times a semester) to 5 (daily/nightly).  
 \* indicates a significant difference between pre- and post-intervention survey responses within rater role at  $p < .05$ .

The Christi Center provides support services for those experiencing grief and loss in Austin, Texas. Although The Christi Center offers free support for AISD students, there is a wait list for services. Additionally, some families experience time/transportation constraints hindering them from using these services.

The Christi Center secured grant funding to provide grief support services to high-need students attending schools in East Austin. Counseling was provided to students in need of grief support by retired AISD counselors trained by Christi Center staff. Using retired counselors gave The Christi Center the flexibility to offer participating students counseling at their home school and during regular school hours. This circumvented the issue of transportation and/or child care issues preventing students from receiving grief counseling. In Spring 2017, 23 students received six to eight grief counseling sessions.



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