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1. Title of submission: **Dealing with Stress, Loss, and Crisis Management in the Classroom**
2. Name of Author: **Ann G. Bessell. Ph.D.**
3. Affiliation: **University of Miami
Research Assistant Professor
School of Education
Department of Teaching and Learning
PO Box 248065
Coral Gables, FL 33124**
4. Mailing address: **1105 Lemonwood Street
Hollywood, FL 33019**
5. E-mail: **Agbessell@miami.edu**

Dealing with Stress, Loss, and Crisis Management in the Classroom

Today's children witness acts of violence, death, and abuse on a daily basis in their neighborhoods, on television, and in the movies. However, when it involves someone they actually know, at a time or in a manner that does not fit into the natural order of things, it can be devastating to all members of the school community. Since children are all too often challenged to face the taboo of death and dying as well as a myriad of individual circumstances which lead to loss and grief, we the adults, need to establish a framework to help and support them.

As educators, one of our primary challenges is to recognize the breadth and scope of the issues around our grieving children and the interrelationship between the unbearable pain and shock of death or loss, unresolved grief, educational success, and responsible citizenry. Unfortunately, Administrators and teachers who are not trained counselors are often put in the position to deal with a death or crisis within the school community while trying to deal with the incident on a personal level as well. Acknowledgment of the relationship between grief, ability to learn, and self-growth is essential in order to help families, children, and teachers travel through the process of recovery from life's cruelest catastrophes. Therefore, it is important for schools to proactively create policies and establish specific plans to clearly respond to a crisis before it occurs.

This session will serve as a guide for gaining better understanding of the facts, myths, and misconceptions about children's loss, grief, and bereavement. In addition, guidelines will be provided for setting up a school-wide and classroom policy in order to provide compassion and understanding to help children and support the adults who care for them. The presenter will promote the principles supported by research that grieving is a normal, natural process and that people have the ability to heal from their loss at their own unique pace and style.

Emphasis will be placed on:

- ◆ Setting up a Crisis Response Team
- ◆ Roles and responsibilities before a crisis

- ◆ Roles and responsibilities during a crisis
- ◆ How to handle the first day, first week, and first month in school
- ◆ Dealing with the media
- ◆ Suggestions for teachers, staff, and parents
- ◆ Creating a long term follow-through plan beyond the crisis time

Participants will learn ways to facilitate:

- ◆ Normalizing the grieving process in the classroom
- ◆ Customizing a plan to deal with chronically ill and medically fragile children
- ◆ Regaining a sense of control and empowerment after a traumatic event
- ◆ Increasing awareness of the availability of support
- ◆ Developing and maintaining feelings of hope and life in the future