

What Clarification looks like in Adolescence

CLARIFICATION

The process of a youth exploring their life events in order to reconcile losses.

What does clarification look like in adolescence? What will we see and hear?

The youth will express feelings of loss and grieve the relationships that no longer exist within their life. They will ask questions and describe their lives in a way that directly reflects their growing understanding of what happened in their past.

During the process of clarification, youth will at times be able to readily engage in discussion about their past and at other times they will resist this dialogue. This is a direct reflection of their grief cycle.

Youth can describe the events that happened within their life that brought them to their current circumstances. They may do this verbally or through a combination of creative expressions like art, writing, music, or other means.

What practices support or interfere with clarification?

It is important to remember the grief basics with adolescents. They can and will revisit all steps of the grief process and the way in which they experience it is also affected by their developmental stage, not just chronological age.

There is no substitute for simply being present with a youth when they are grieving. Your presence alone can speak louder to them about your commitment to them than any words ever could.

Avoid "teen-splaining" a youth's history to them- they know WAY more than we realize and understand more than we know!

Listen, REALLY listen, when a youth tells you their version of their story. It is their truth and the truth that matters most.

Remember that clarification is an ongoing and intentional process. Expect, with the youth's lead, to revisit topics, ideas, and exploration of events in their time and with their frame of reference.

Youth have a right to know THEIR information regardless of whether or not we feel fear about telling them.

Allow the youth to use the words, language, and terms that have meaning to them when they are talking about their life.

Youth may ask questions that go deeper into their identity, such as asking about their heritage and culture. This is a continued attempt to fill holes of "lost self."



