

Bereavement Counseling: A Dilemma for School Counselors?

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ABSTRACT The paper sought to establish the challenges faced by counselors as they offer bereavement counseling to secondary school learners in Harare. A qualitative methodological approach was utilized to obtain data from respondents and an interpretivist paradigm was adopted to capture experiences of four counselors from two secondary schools as they offered bereavement counseling to parentally bereaved learners. A multiple case study design was adopted for this study. The paper revealed that counselors experienced a plethora of challenges such as non-cooperation from caregivers and other colleagues in the school, having to deal with the complex nature of children's bereavement experiences, and lack of expertise in assisting bereaved learners. As such, the paper concludes that counselors face challenges in counseling bereaved children in the selected schools and that learners do not get adequate bereavement counseling as counselors lack confidence in carrying out their counseling duties. Hence, the paper recommends that schools equip counselors with additional bereavement counseling skills so that they can implement it more effectively.