

Grade 8 Life Orientation Worksheet

Dealing with traumatic situations - case studies

Read these following short stories:

1. Lerato and Mbali recently lost their family in a shack fire. Lerato is still recovering in hospital from burn wounds, but thanks to Mbali dragging her from the burning shack, she will survive. Mbali is staying with her aunt and tries to visit Lerato daily. Mbali feels at a loss. She is one of very many people to have suffered and lost due to the fire that swept through their homes. But everybody just seems to be getting on with it – caught in their own survival mode. Mbali wonders if they feel like she does, or if she is going crazy. She cannot sleep – if she closes her eyes all she can see is a fire blazing and her mom screaming. She can hear her mom and her baby sister’s screaming in every sound that passes by. She wants to plug her ears with cotton wool. She feels so alone and so angry with the world.
2. Mary’s twin, Anna, recently died of cancer. She was diagnosed 2 years ago and was put through very aggressive chemotherapy, which made her extremely ill. There was a brief period when the chemotherapy ended that the old Anna seemed to be back for a while. Mary, who had been so afraid of losing her sister and had sat with her through many difficult nights, suddenly felt a wave of hope washing over her. Even though Anna was still weak, that magic spark was back in her eyes. But, just as suddenly, Anna took a turn for the worse. She writhed in pain and woke crying in the night. The cancer had spread and was growing at an alarming rate. Towards the end, before death claimed her, she surrendered to a morphine-induced daze and was already lost to Mary. Mary sat with her for hours, waiting for the rare moments when Anna would recognise her and smile tiredly before dipping back into deep sleep. Mary did not want Anna to suffer anymore, but now wanders around aimlessly, not knowing what to do without her twin. She is plagued by memories of Anna’s face scrunched up in pain and feels guilty that it happened to Anna and not her. At the same time, she is so afraid that it will happen to her. She does not want to go through that torture.
3. Sizwe loved spending Saturday mornings with his five-year-old son, Andile. While mom got the house sorted, did shopping and had a quick lunch with the girls, it was boys’ day together. Every Saturday, they would find something fun to do. Then one day tragedy struck and nothing was ever the same. Sizwe had planned to take Andile to the Zoo. Andile was so excited, dressed in his cammo pants, strapped in his car seat and babbling on about everything he would see at the Zoo. Sizwe smiled at Andile through the rear-view mirror and saw the expression change on his son’s face before he felt the cold of the gun pressed to his head. He was forced out of the vehicle and fought to get to Andile out of his car seat. The highjackers shoved him away and drove off with Andile in the backseat. The last Sizwe saw was his son screaming and holding his arms to his dad. Sizwe ran behind the vehicle until he

Grade 8 Life Orientation Worksheet

could not see it anymore. Andile was found a few hours later, shot dead, on the side of the road.

Activity 1: Discussion about traumatic situations

Divide into workgroups of about 5 people per group.

Discuss the traumatic situations in the short stories above.

Answer the following questions in your discussions:

Story 1:

- How do fires manage to spread through a community so quickly?
- How are the fires started?
- Do you think that Lerato could be suffering from post-traumatic stress? Why? What should she do?
- Describe the emotions Lerato is feeling.
- How do you think Lerato feels because she did not also save her Mom and baby sister?
- Why is Lerato angry?

Story 2:

- How do you think Mary first felt when she found out that Anna had cancer?
- How do you think Anna felt?
- Why did Mary have a brief period of hope?
- Do you think that made it even more difficult for her when Anna died?
- How do you think Mary feels now that Anna has passed away?
- Describe Mary's emotions throughout this ordeal.
- Why is cancer such a traumatic disease for a family to cope with?
- Do you think family support groups help people to cope with this kind of trauma?

Story 3:

- How do you think Sizwe felt when he turned to see a gun in his face?
- Sizwe was unable to get his son out of his car seat. How do you think that made him feel?
- Describe the emotions that you think went through Sizwe when he saw the car pull off with his son inside.
- Describe the emotions you think Sizwe might have felt after learning that his son was killed.
- Do you think that Sizwe would need counselling to be able to live with this situation?

Grade 8 Life Orientation Worksheet

Your teacher will assess your participation in the group discussion using the checklist below.

Checklist for observation of group discussion			
Name:		Date:	
	Criteria: Does the learner:	Yes	No
1	Wait for a pause before s/he interrupts a speaker?		
2	Interrupt a speaker politely?		
3	Show evidence of having understood the concepts described in the stories?		
4	Keep to the topic under discussion?		
5	Cover all the points listed for each story?		
6	Give reasons to support alternative points of view?		
7	Make points clearly using appropriate vocal volume?		
8	Make eye contact when speaking?		
9	Use body language appropriately?		
10	Make notes when applicable to remember points made by others?		
2 marks for every 'yes' answer: 20 total			

Grade 8 Life Orientation Worksheet

Activity 2: Mind map about traumatic situations

Select one of the stories above and illustrate the findings of your group discussion using a mind map.

Your teacher will assess your mind map using this rubric.

Category	4 marks	3 marks	2 marks	1 mark
<i>Participation</i>	The learner put great effort into the work.	A good effort made.	Some effort made.	The learner did very little work on the mind map.
Required elements	The mind map contains most of the information that was discussed.	The mind map contains some of the information that was discussed.	The mind map contains a little of the information that was discussed.	The mind map is off the topic.
Relevance	All the concepts are relevant.	Most of the ideas are relevant.	Some of the ideas are relevant.	The concepts do not relate to the topic.
Flow	The concepts flow very well.	There is a fair amount of flow.	The concepts flow a little.	There is no concept flow.
Attractiveness	Very attractive, colours used, very neat.	Fairly attractive in terms of design, layout and neatness.	Acceptably attractive.	Messy and poorly designed.
Total marks: 20				

Grade 8 Life Orientation Worksheet

Suggested Solutions

Question number	Possible marks	Solution
1	20	See checklist 1 in Appendix of Assessment Tools.
2	20	See rubric 2 in Appendix of Assessment Tools.

1. Checklist to assess participation in the group discussion

Name:		Date:	
	Criteria: Does the learner:	Yes	No
1	Wait for a pause before s/he interrupts a speaker?		
2	Interrupt a speaker politely?		
3	Show evidence of having understood the concepts described in the stories?		
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5	Cover all the points listed for each story?		
6	Give reasons to support alternative points of view?		
7	Make points clearly using appropriate vocal volume?		
8	Make eye contact when speaking?		
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2 marks for every 'yes' answer: 20 total			

Grade 8 Life Orientation Worksheet

2. Rubric to assess mind map

Category	4 marks	3 marks	2 marks	1 mark
<i>Participation</i>	The learner put great effort into the work.	A good effort made.	Some effort made.	The learner did very little work on the mind map.
Required elements	The mind map contains most of the information that was discussed.	The mind map contains some of the information that was discussed.	The mind map contains a little of the information that was discussed.	The mind map is off the topic.
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Total marks: 20				