2005 Upward Bound Student Leadership Conference

The 28th annual, statewide, Upward Bound Leadership Conference was held March 24-26 at the Embassy Suites in Oklahoma City.

Mr. Boykin selected a handful of students to participate in this special program. This year’s attendees were: Stephanie P., ShaRaye R., Kimberely H., Miechia W., Jatalia L., Elisha T., Christina L., Dee Dee H., Jay C., Anthony C., Roschan S. and Brian W.

One-hundred fifty-four fellow Upward Bound students from across the state attended. Our students really got to know students from the Conners and Cameron programs because they participated in the “Night on the Town” event Thursday night. This event took us to the State Capitol, the beautifully lighted Oklahoma City Memorial and an exciting and chilly Watertaxi ride on the canal in Bricktown.

Friday evening was an elegant affair that brought to mind our etiquette training last year. As president of the OSU-OKC Upward Bound, Dee Dee was the mistress of ceremonies for the event. Mr. Boykin spun the music for the dance Friday night.

Saturday’s breakout sessions were the meat of the event. Four professional presenters discussed issues of leadership with the students.

OSU-OKC Upward Bound was the host of this year’s conference.
Coping with Loss and Grief

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Losing a loved one or friend to death is one of the most difficult challenges we face in our lives. When the death is sudden and involves young people that challenge can be even greater. As we deal with grief we are often flooded with intense feelings and may find that we are not able to function in ways which are “normal” for us. As a result, people who are experiencing grief sometimes think that there is something wrong with them or that they are “going crazy.” Actually, there is a very wide range of normal responses to grief, and the way in which each person experiences that grief is likely to be very individual.

Among the responses which many people have to grief are some of the following: a sense of overwhelming sadness; feelings of despair or hopelessness; anger at the deceased, oneself, others or God; difficulty concentrating; disturbances in sleep and appetite; feeling guilty about “unfinished business” in the relationship; feeling disorganized and distracted. One of the most common reactions, and one which can be frightening to many people, is experiencing rapid and intense mood changes, including crying frequently and sometimes for no apparent reason.

The grieving process generally follows a kind of pattern or flow. Initially we tend to experience numbness and a state of disbelief. This is followed by yearning for the person who has died, and is often experienced as “waves” of sadness which come and go. As the first, intense feelings pass the person may experience a deeper or more subtle sense of disorganization, despair and apathy about everyday events. Finally, the person experiences reorganization in which the ability to move forward into life without the loved one becomes more possible.

While the old maxim that time heals is certainly true with grief, there are also things which we can do to help the grieving process. First and foremost is to be patient with ourselves. There is no “right” way to grieve and we should expect that for a while we will not feel or function like ourselves. Openly expressing our feelings and thoughts about our loved one and the impact of the loss helps us to process our feelings and heal. Taking time to remember the good times we had and positive things about that person and our relationship helps us to deal with any guilt we may be feeling. And taking good care of ourselves physically - eating, sleeping, exercising, and being thoughtful about our alcohol intake - helps to minimize possible negative health impacts.

Understanding and trusting that our feelings are normal and okay, and that grief is a process which unfolds and passes, helps us to cope. And sometimes we feel the need to speak with someone outside our family or circle of friends for additional support or to make sure that we’re really “okay.”

Source: campusblues.com

Your Upward Bound counselor is an excellent resource if you are dealing with loss and grief - contact her to schedule an appointment. The program will also be adding books on grief and loss to the U.B. library.