

◇ Chapter 16
Coping with Crisis

Enrichment Activities

PERSONAL COPING STRATEGIES

Everyone will be faced with at least one major crisis in his or her lifetime. Most people will face several. These might include the loss of a loved one, a divorce, or a house fire. Each person handles crises in different ways. Some run away from the situation, others turn inward to find strength, still others busy themselves with everyday tasks to avoid facing the inevitable.

Directions: Think of a time when you had to face a major crisis. How did you react? Evaluate your coping mechanisms by answering the questions below.

1. What major crisis did you have to face?

2. Describe your initial reaction.

3. Explain the subsequent stages of your reaction to the crisis.

4. What did you learn about yourself from this experience?

5. People sometimes learn coping strategies from others. An individual's personality also plays a major role in determining his or her coping strategies. Why do you think you have adopted the coping strategies you have?

Chapter 16
Coping with Crisis

Enrichment Activities

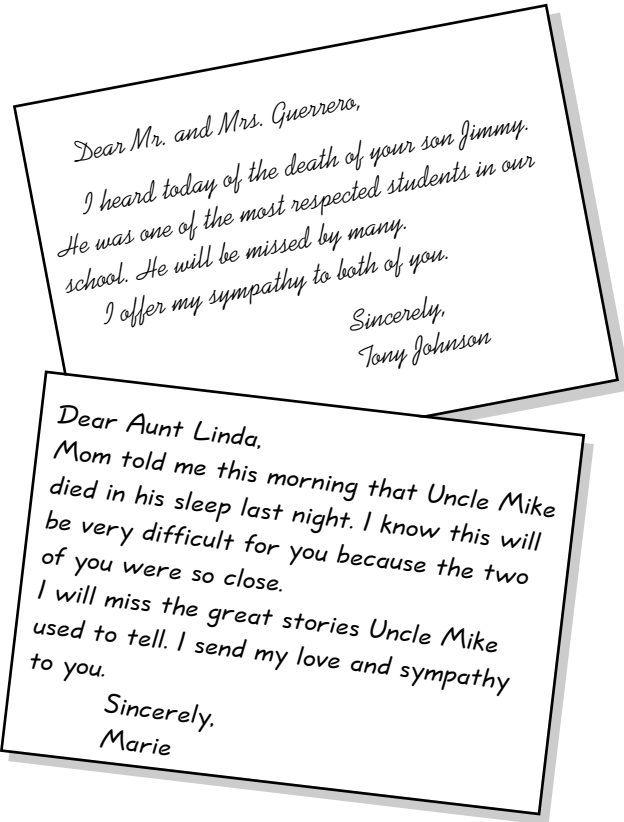
A NOTE OF CONDOLENCE

One of the kindest things you can do when a friend or relative is grieving over the loss of a loved one is to write a letter or note of condolence. Even if you send food, flowers, or make a donation to charity, writing a note remains a special gesture, because it shows personal caring. These notes are often saved and read over and over again by the grieving person.

Writing a note of condolence is not always easy. Many people think it is "bringing up" a sad subject and they may not know what to say. If you feel this way, just ask yourself, "What would I like to hear from someone if I had just lost someone close to me?" You would probably be more hurt by not receiving a note than by receiving an awkwardly written one. Sincere sorrow, expressed in your very own words, is just right. You might want to include an honest statement about the person who died and maybe a fond memory you have of that person. You may also want to let the grieving person know you will be thinking of him or her. Once you have decided to write a note, keep these things in mind:

- Hand write your note in black ink on plain white stationery. You can purchase a sympathy card and write your personal note in it if you like.
- Write your note as soon as you hear of the death. It is not only most appreciated then, but it may be easier to write because your feelings are fresh and sincere.
- Write only what you truly feel. Do not be overly sentimental or exaggerate your feelings. Be sincere and write from your heart.
- Keep your message short and simple. Don't try to say too much.

Here are two examples of condolence notes.



1. What could Tony have added to his note?

2. What did Marie say in her note that her Aunt Linda will probably appreciate very much?

Focus In

For practice, write a condolence note in your own words to the relatives of someone you know, or to a fictitious person.