

ABSTRACT

An Investigation Into the Effects of Parental Bereavement at Deep South Secondary School (DSS)

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This study explored the experiences and coping mechanisms of bereaved students who lost a parent or parents, at a rural secondary school in the St. Patrick Educational District of Trinidad and Tobago. Data were collected through interviews with six students (four girls and two boys) from Forms 3-5, as well as through observation. The findings revealed that most of the students felt that their bereavement altered their school life. Many expressed an overwhelming sense of grief and frustration, associated more with the changes that occurred in their lives after the loss of their parents, rather than with the death itself. The majority of the students, however, experienced problems at school, which ranged from harassment by other students, disagreements, and minor infractions, to fights with other students. The students expressed a need for the school to have a support system that would assist students in coping with parental bereavement.

Keywords: Secondary school students; Student attitudes; Parent student relationship; Student sociology; Death; Case studies; Student welfare; Trinidad and Tobago