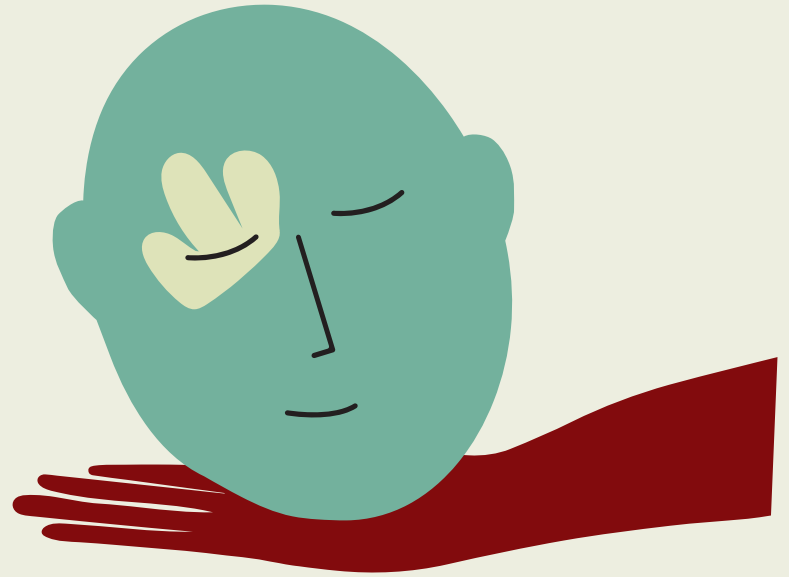


Grief & Loss Workshop

By Childhood Matters



INTRODUCTIONS



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Objectives:

- **Learn Empathy for Children Coping with Grief**
 - **Step into Their Shoes: Understanding the Grief Experience**
 - **Gain Insight into General Information on Grief**
 - **Discover Strategies to Best Support Others in Their Grief Journey**
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Feeling Rock Backpack Activity

Sharing the grief load.





What is grief & loss?

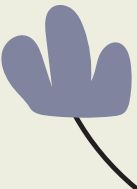
Grief:

Grief is a strong, sometimes overwhelming emotion and is the natural reaction to loss. Grief is both a universal and a personal experience. Typically, the more significant the loss, the more intensely one experiences grief.

Loss:

Losses that result in grief include:

- Death (loved one, pet)
- Divorce/Relationship ending
- Friendship ending
- Health issues (self/family)
- Parent job loss
- Relocation (moving homes/schools)
- And more!





Types of Grief and Loss

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NON-DEATH LOSS

Loss of employment, divorce, incarceration, trauma, mental/physical illness.

ANTICIPATORY GRIEF

Illness, people engaging in risky behaviours, impending ending of a relationship.

TRAUMATIC GRIEF

Death of a child, parent, partner (unexpected or out of order), homicide, suicide.

SECONDARY LOSS

Related/connected to a primary loss.

AMBIGUOUS LOSS

When there's a lingering sense of loss without clarity on what's been lost.

COLLECTIVE GRIEF

Natural disasters, death of a public figure, terrorist attack, pandemic.

CUMULATIVE GRIEF

New loss while grieving the first loss.

NONFINITE LOSS

When desires or plans go unfulfilled.

DISENFRANCHISED GRIEF

Losses not socially recognized or acknowledged—pregnancy loss, adoption that does not go through, loss of mobility.



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Grief Expression

What's In Your Heart?



Stages of Grief

The 5 Stages of Grief

- Nonlinear (they can happen out of order at random times)
- Can have repeats of the stages

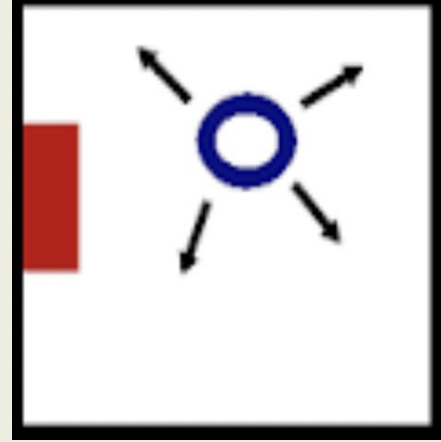
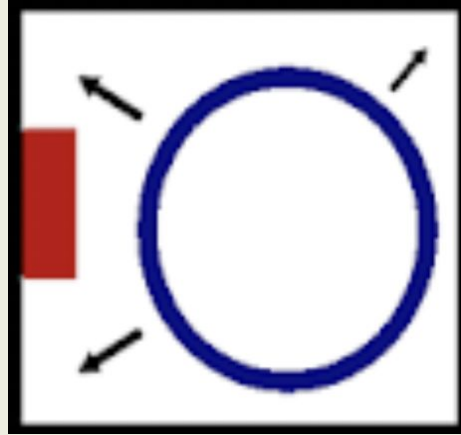
THE FIVE STAGES OF THE GRIEVING PROCESS

KÜBLER-ROSS GRIEF CYCLE



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Box and Ball



Every child is unique

There are no hard and fast rules about how children will or should grieve at a particular age. Your child may respond differently. For example, some young children don't act out their grief but talk a great deal and ask many questions. There is no "normal" or "right" way for children to grieve.





“When I told them their dad had died, after crying for a few minutes, they ran off to play. I was so shocked.”


Rather than talking about their grief, children often express what they're feeling through their behavior. When an illness or death makes them feel less safe and secure, it's also common for them to revert to younger behaviour. For example:

Not wanting to sleep alone.

Being afraid to be separated from you.

Struggling to manage their emotions.

Having accidents even though they are toilet trained.





Children grieve in chunks

Young children tend to have a wonderful ability to balance joy and sorrow at the same time. They can move very quickly between being sad and playing happily. This is normal. It's important to recognize that a child who is playing and having fun can still be grieving deeply.



Their grief often looks like puddle jumping. When they're in the puddle of grief, it feels huge – then they jump out and quickly resume playing and other activities.



Symptoms of Grief

Depression

Guilt

Shock

Fear

Intrusive Thoughts

Forgetfulness

Regret

Disassociation

Loneliness

Overwhelm

Anger

Anxiety





Some ways children/teens express feelings of grief:

Acting Out

Fighting, partaking in risky behaviors, impulsivity, substance use, lashing out verbally or physically, or display aggression towards others or themselves.

Withdrawing

Sleeping more, drop in their grades, listening to music/headphones on all the time, hiding their feelings, not eating.

Visible Big Emotions

Increased crying, fears about the future, worries about own safety or the safety of loved ones.

Physical Symptoms

Headaches, stomach aches or fatigue, regressive behaviors such as thumb-sucking or bed wetting.

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GRIEF
THE TANGLED BALL OF EMOTIONS



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HOW ARE YOU FEELING?



HAPPY



MISERABLE



NERVOUS



CONFUSED



WORRIED



ANGRY



SAD



CALM

All Emotions Are Valid

¿CÓMO TE SIENTES?



feliz



miserable



miedo



confusa



preocupado



enojado



triste



Tranquilo

Todos los sentimientos son válidos.



Grief Coping Skills

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Journaling

Have them write or draw their thoughts and feelings. Maybe using a prompt!

Nature

Spending time outside. Doing a guided nature walk appreciating the cycle of life.

Crying

Give them permission to cry.

Play

Play can be powerful as it allows them to express emotions, process their feelings, and find comfort in a safe and creative way.

Scrapbooking

Making a scrapbook in honor of the source of the grief.

Support Groups

Finding a grief support group in your area to create meaningful connections and to have a safe space.

Art

Painting, using clay, doodling, sketching, photography, etc.



How To Help Someone Who Is Grieving?

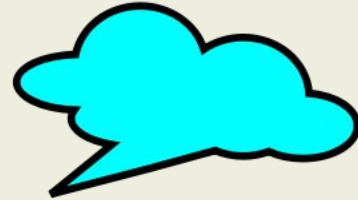
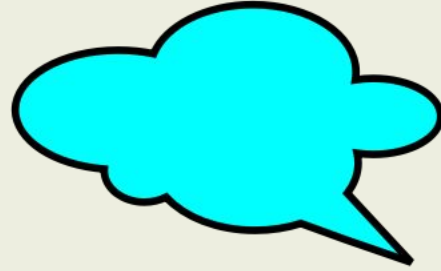


HOW TO HELP A GRIEVING FRIEND



Conversations in the Face of Grief

It can feel very awkward to approach a child who has experienced loss, but silence actually communicates a lot to young people. Reaching out to grieving children lets them know that you recognize their situation and want to be supportive.



Strategies to help children feel safe and secure

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Keep routines as regular as possible.

Answer Questions Honestly.

Share Simple, Soothing Activities & Memory Projects.

Try to be consistent and predictable.

Encourage Connection with Peers

Create a Safe, Open Environment. Validate their feelings.

Reframe their self-blame- they may internalize guilt, so gently remind them they are not at fault.



Modeling Grief

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- 01** Children are allowed to witness adults cry, share thoughts and express feelings, this gives them permission to cry, feel and share. Additionally share with your child the ways that help you calm and soothe yourself.
- 02** Model getting support from your support network and from professional services.
- 03** Use simple and direct language when grieving the loss of a loved one. Avoid euphemisms like “gone to a better place” or “sleeping,” as these can be confusing.
- 04** Show kindness to yourself in your grieving process. Saying things like, “It’s okay to take things slow today” or “I need a little extra rest because I’m feeling sad” helps children learn to be gentle with themselves



Active Listening 101!

| | | |
|----|---------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Empathy & Validation | Put yourself in their shoes; be curious; validate their feelings; don't interrupt; let them lead the conversation; voice your support |
| 2. | Body Language | Eye contact; giving your full attention; nodding your head; staying present; un-crossing your arms; facing the person you're talking to |
| 3. | No Judgment | Making the space a safe one; defer judgment; stay neutral and objective; asking "what do you need from me?" instead of offering your opinion/advice |





Examples of Active Listening Statements

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You are not alone. I'm not going anywhere.

I wish I had the right words to help you feel better. Just know that I hear you and that I care.

I know opening up is scary.
Thank you for trusting me.



I can only imagine how hard this is.

It's okay to cry.

Would you like a hug?

I'm here for you. You can talk,
I am here to listen.

So much has changed for you.

If you feel comfortable, I would love to hear what's on your mind.

Simple Self-Regulation Practices

Breathwork

This can be taking a few deep, mindful breaths (inhaling through your nose/exhaling through your mouth) or practicing a guided breathing technique!

Count to 10

Counting gives you a moment to step back, reflect, and neutralize.

Name your feelings

Clarify how you are feeling in the moment. This is a great way to practice self-reflection in order to figure out next steps.

Positive self-talk

These can be positive affirmations (like “I am strong”) or validating yourself (“I am valid for feeling this way right now”)

Remember...

**Our role is not to “fix” a child’s grief.
Instead, our role is to help the child grieve
by facilitating or “making easy” the process.**

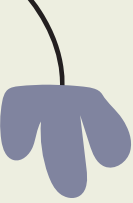




Children's grief does not shrink over time

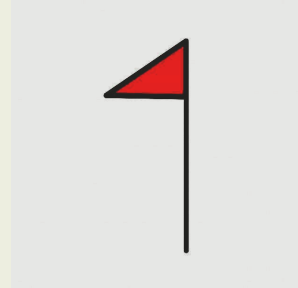


They just grow around their grief



Watch for red flags that may signal a child is struggling to cope with grief, such as:

- **persistent sadness,**
- **withdrawal from friends and family,**
- **changes in appetite or sleep,**
- **academic decline,**
- **excessive anger or irritability,**
- **or engaging in risky behaviors;**



These signs may indicate they need additional support or professional help.



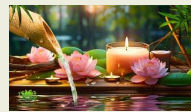
Shake It Off- Let's Reset Our Nervous System



All the Pieces Of Grief



- **Inside the bowl:** Write or draw challenging emotions (e.g., grief, sadness) to represent what you feel on the "inside."
- **Outside the bowl:** Write or draw sources of support and comfort (e.g., loved ones, hobbies) to symbolize healing.
- **Cut the bowl:** Use scissors to cut the bowl into pieces of different shapes and sizes, representing "broken" parts.
- **Reassemble the bowl:** Use tape to reconnect the pieces, symbolizing how support and resilience help rebuild you.

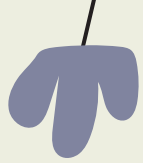


Reflections





Questions?



Resources for Grief & Loss

- NACG – National Alliance for Children’s Grief
<https://nacg.org/resource-library/>
- Our House
Grief Support Center
<https://www.ourhouse-grief.org/>
- <http://www.hospiceoftheconejo.org>
- Grief Share:
<https://www.griefshare.org/>
- Livingston Memorial Grief Support Groups <https://www.lmvna.org/>
- Didi Hirsch Suicide Bereavement Support Group, Newbury Park: (424) 362-2912



Feedback & Thank You!

Contact us!
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