

UNDERSTANDING Loss and Grief

WHAT IS LOSS?

As we go through life we will face many losses. Loss means something important has changed or is no longer the same.

WHAT IS GRIEF?

Grief is all those thoughts, feelings, and behaviors we experience when we are separated from someone important to us. Grief is mostly recognized as a reaction after someone dies, but it can also happen with any kind of loss.

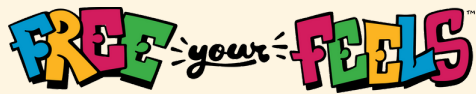
COMMON TYPES OF LOSS:

The death of a person
Relationship or friendship break-ups
Parents' divorce
Parent or sibling's incarceration
Moving to a new home or school
Losing a pet
Deportation of family members
Changes in your (or a loved ones) health/mental health
Financial struggles – like a caregiver losing a job

HOW GRIEF MIGHT FEEL:

Trouble sleeping
Feeling anxious or nervous
Getting angry easily
Feeling numb or disconnected
Eating more or less than usual
Crying unexpectedly
Feeling guilty or blaming yourself for the death
Withdrawing or isolating
Physical symptoms (headaches, stomach aches, fast heartbeat)

Know that these and other reactions are normal when we are grieving. It can help to talk with someone we trust about feelings, or expressing feelings through journaling, drawing, or other creative outlets.



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ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

GOODBYE LETTER:

Write a letter to the person or thing you've lost or are losing. You don't have to send it – just writing it can help you process your feelings.

NEW BEGINNINGS COLLAGE:

Use magazines or drawings to show what you are looking forward to. Though there is sadness in loss you can also focus on how things might look in the future.

MINDFUL MOMENT:

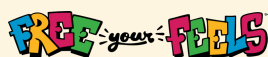
When grief and loss feel overwhelming, take a few minutes to calm your body and mind:

1. Sit or lie down comfortably. Put your hands on your belly and feel it rise and fall when you breathe.
2. Take a deep breath in through your nose like you're smelling a flower... and let it out slowly through your mouth like you're blowing out a candle.
3. As you breathe in, think of a memory or something that makes you feel warm inside, maybe a special person, a pet, or a happy moment. As you breathe out, let your body relax a little more each time. If it feels to painful to think of a memory, just concentrate on your breath and stay in the moment.

RESOURCES



A Georgia-based nonprofit supporting kids, teens, families & young adults grieving the death of someone important to them.



A Georgia-based mental health awareness & education campaign.



Call or text 988 for free, 24/7 emotional support.



Offers resources & support for children & families dealing with trauma & grief.



Tools for coping with grief, especially in school settings.