

GRIEF & LOSS

SUPPORTING CHILDREN

INFORMATION SHEET

What is Grief & Loss?

Grief is the natural response to a loss. Losing someone or something you love can be extremely difficult and evoke a range of emotions such as anger, shock, guilt, and sadness. These emotions are normal and part of the grieving process. There are five stages of grief that were formulated by Kubler-Ross which are: Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression and Acceptance.

EXPERIENCING LOSS MAY BE FELT WHEN:

Someone close to you passes away
Loss of a job
Loss of your health
Death of a pet
A relationship breakup or loss of a friendship

RESPONSES MAY INCLUDE:

Physical - difficulty sleeping, feelings of nausea, sweating, headaches, shaking or trembling, extreme tiredness

Cognitive - slowed thinking, difficulty concentrating, difficulties with problem solving and decision making, thinking a lot about the incident or the person who has died

Emotional – anxiety/worry, sadness, fear, loss of motivation, anger, irritability, guilt, or feeling nothing at all (numb or blank)

There is no right or wrong way to grieve but there are ways to cope with the pain.

Some kinds of reactions occur straight away, others may not appear for days or weeks.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Listen and comfort. Every child reacts in their own way when they learn that a loved one has died. Some kids cry. Some ask questions. Others seem not to react at all. All of these responses are okay.

Put feelings into words. Ask kids to say what they're thinking and feeling. Label some of your own feelings. This makes it easier for kids to share theirs. Say things like, "I know you're feeling very sad. I'm sad, too."



Stay with your child to offer hugs or comfort. Answer your child's questions. Or just be together for a few minutes. It's OK if your child sees your sadness or tears.

Explain events that will happen. Allow children to join in rituals like viewings, funerals, or memorial services. Tell them ahead of time what will happen. For example, "Lots of people who loved Grandma will be there. People might cry and hug. They might say to us, 'I'm sorry for your loss.' We can say, 'Thank you,' or 'Thanks for coming.' You can stay near me and hold my hand if you want."



Help your child remember the person. In the days and weeks ahead, encourage your child to draw pictures or write down stories of their loved one. Don't avoid talking about the person who died. Sharing happy memories helps heal grief.

Acknowledge that your feelings will be up and down and that what you are experiencing is normal and part of the grieving process.

Help your child feel better. Provide the comfort your child needs but don't dwell on sad feelings. After a few minutes of talking and listening, shift to an activity or topic that helps your child feel a little better. Play, make art, cook, or go somewhere together.

WHERE TO GO FOR SUPPORT

Call or email Enriching Minds Psychology:

Email: admin@enrichingmindspsychology.com.au

Phone: 0422 690 917

Address: 104/46 Grainger Road, West Footscray



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