



DECEMBER: GRIEF AND LOSS

– What Caregivers Need to Know –

The Basics

Grief is a person's normal response to a loss. Grief can be felt when we lose someone or something that is important to us. It can be felt from the death of a loved one (including pets), divorce, changing in relationships (including friendships), changes in health, losing a job, and even moving to a new place. Symptoms of grief can be felt physically and emotionally and can play out in your feelings, thoughts, physical sensations, and behaviors. Grief is experienced differently by everyone, and the symptoms can include anger, anxiety, irritability, confusion, disbelief, dizziness, upset stomach, crying spells, loss of energy and interest in enjoyable activities. Holidays and anniversaries can often bring up feelings of grief and loss as loved ones are remembered.

Stages of Grief

Shock/denial:

Trouble accepting the fact of death, diagnosis or new reality, numbness
Inability to do usual activities

Anger:

Anger at yourself, others, professionals (particularly doctors), God, life
Feeling helpless and powerless, abandoned

Bargaining:

Making "deals" with God or friends hoping to change the situation
Thinking about "what could have been" or "should have done differently"

Depression:

Feeling overwhelmed with loss and change, sadness, regret, fear, anxiety, lonely, isolated, self-pity, empty, lost
Isolating self from others.

Feeling no one else understands you or your loss

Acceptance:

Adjusting to the new reality, starting to move on
Sense of hope, healing, and integration

Talking with your child:

1. Encourage your child to express their feelings in some way (talking, drawing, writing)
2. Stick to routines as structure and predictability can help kids after a loss
3. Don't ignore your own grief- be sure to find the support you need as well!
4. Reach out to your school's wellness team for additional support for your child if needed

Additional Resources

- Article: [Handling Holidays after a Death in the family](#)
- Self Care Video: [Chair Yoga](#)