



## Dealing with Grief & Loss

### Stages of Grief:

These stages can occur in any order, last for different lengths of time, and can occur over and over.

**Denial**- Believing or pretending that the loss didn't happen.

**Anger**-Feeling anger is often easier than feeling sadness, worry, or despair. You might be angry at the person you lost, angry at yourself, or angry at your family and friends.

**Bargaining**-Trying to change or take back the loss by promising to "be good" or "do better".

**Depression**-Feeling intense sadness about the loss.

**Acceptance**-Understanding the loss and being ready to move forward with your life in a healthy way (even though you may still feel sad).

There is no time limit on grief, and no wrong way to grieve. Everyone experiences this process in their own way.

### What is Grief?

Grief is what people experience when they lose someone or something they felt close to or loved. This could include death of a loved one, loss of a pet, loss of a friendship, a break-up, divorce, or moving to another area. Grief is a natural reaction, but it can affect each person in a different way.

*If you or someone you know is having difficulty coping with a loss, tell a trusted adult right away! There is always help available, but you have to speak up.*





## Healthy ways to Cope with Grief

It is important to find healthy ways to cope with difficult feelings when grieving. Healthy coping can help you move through the stages of grief a little easier and achieve *acceptance* of the loss.

- ✚ **Talk about it!** Even if you don't feel comfortable, it's important to talk about your feelings to help you work through the stages of grief and avoid getting stuck.
- ✚ **Turn to friends and family.** Now is the time to lean on the people who care about you. Spend time with friends and family and accept the help that's offered.
- ✚ **Express your feelings creatively.** Play music, dance, sing, draw, paint, write, scrapbook. Whatever creative thing works for you.
- ✚ **Maintain your hobbies and interests.** Continue to do the things that bring you joy and you are used to. There is comfort in routine.
- ✚ **Perform a goodbye ceremony.** Write a letter saying goodbye to the one you've lost, or draw a picture of your favorite activity with the one you've lost. Talk with friends and family about the fond memories you share.
- ✚ **Speak to the School Counselor.** School Counselors can provide support during difficult times and link students and families with additional community resources.
- ✚ **Practice relaxation.** Try deep breathing exercises, meditation, yoga, praying, playing with a pet, gardening, or being in nature.
- ✚ **Take care of your body.** The stress of experiencing a loss can be very difficult. Eating healthy and exercising regularly will help you feel more energy and improve your mood.
- ✚ **Be patient and be kind to yourself.** Grieving is hard and takes time, and sometimes a lot of time. Give yourself the time you need to grieve in a healthy way, and know that you are doing the best you can!

### Resources:

#### Local

SMA Helpline 800-539-4228

#### Childrens' Grief Centers

BeginAgain (Daytona) 386-425-3100

BeginAgain (DeLand) 386-425-9889

#### National

[griefresourcenetwork.com](http://griefresourcenetwork.com)

SAMHSA National Hotline 800-662-4357

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-8255



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