

FOSTER & KINSHIP CARE EDUCATION PROGRAM

Grief and Loss Workshop

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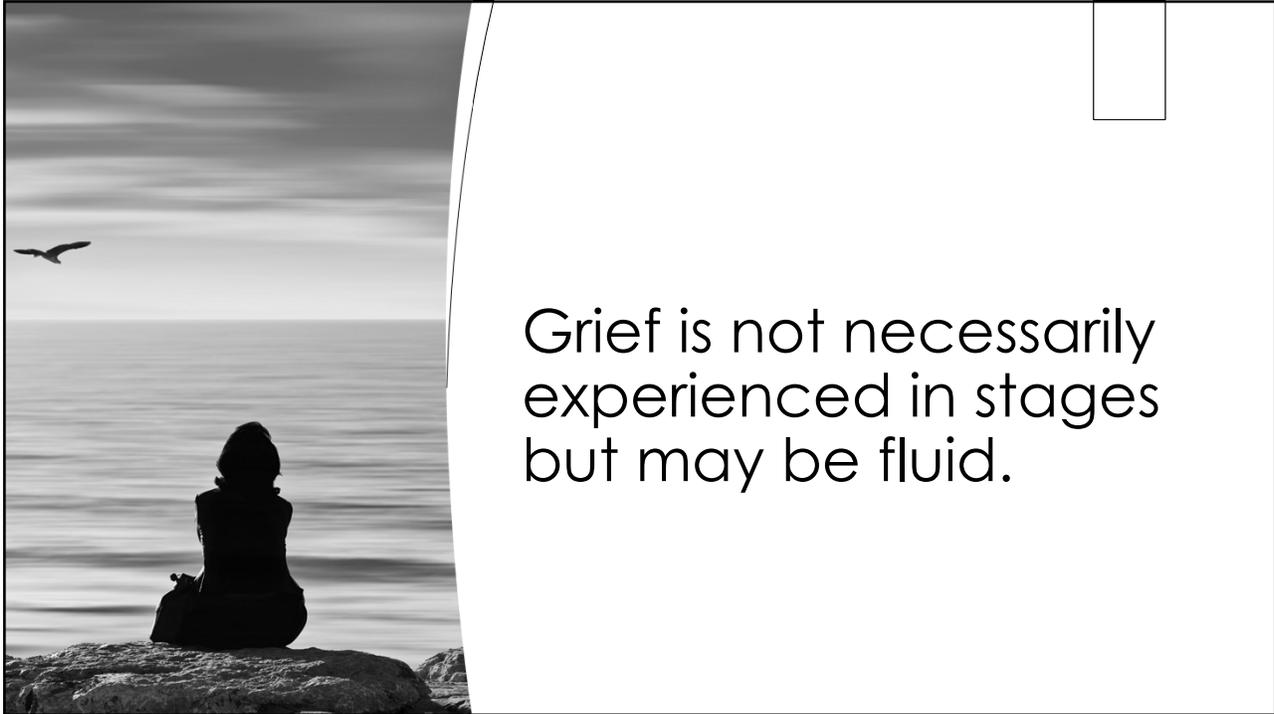
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Confidentiality,
Respect and
Honesty

Agreements?



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Grief is a natural response to a loss and is universal.

Types of Loss

- ▶ Loss of relationship
- ▶ Loss of health
- ▶ Changes in a role or job
- ▶ Loss of financial stability
- ▶ A miscarriage or still birth
- ▶ Death of a family member
- ▶ Loss of a pet
- ▶ Loss of a cherished dream
- ▶ A loved ones series illness
- ▶ Loss of a friend
- ▶ Loss of safety after a traumatic incident
- ▶ Others?

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What types of loss do you think foster families experience when they take children into their care?

- ▶ Friends
- ▶ Lifestyle
- ▶ Belongings
- ▶ Sleep
- ▶ Other?



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What type of loss
can foster children
experience?

- ▶ Self esteem
- ▶ School
- ▶ Friends
- ▶ Trust
- ▶ Others?

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What type of loss do you
think birth parents may
experience?

- Money
- Identity
- Home
- Friends
- Others?



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REMOVED 3



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Discussion

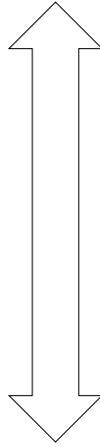
Family
Reunification

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Meaning of Loss for this Child

Boys

- ▶ Withdraw
- ▶ Substituting anger and aggression for other feelings
- ▶ Maintaining silence
- ▶ Repressing guilt
- ▶ Experiencing confusion



Girls

- ▶ Cry more often than boys
- ▶ Care eliciting behavior
- ▶ Depressed or withdrawn
- ▶ May talk about event (s) more

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Anticipated vs Suddenness

- ▶ Chronic vs Event



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POLL

What are some strategies to assist children cope with the feeling of loss?

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Coping Styles and Strategies

- Giving child control of events in their lives
- Opportunities to problem solve with the child; identify problem, develop plans, and determine consequences
- Opportunity for positive events in the child's life
 - Build neuron connections
- Self regulation techniques
- Every behavior given context makes sense
- Normalize and validate the child's feelings
- Consistency and patients

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Other strategies that you've tried?

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Stages of Grief

- ▶ **Denial**
 - This cannot be happening to me
- ▶ **Anger**
 - Why is this happening and who is to blame?
- ▶ **Bargaining**
 - Make this not happen and in return I will _____
- ▶ **Depression**
 - I am too sad to do anything
- ▶ **Acceptance**
 - I am at peace with what happened

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Possible Grief Reactions in Children

- Food insecurity
- Shock and disbelief
- Regressive behavior
- Bed wetting
- Sleep difficulties
- Anger and acting-out behavior
- Guilt
- School problems
- Problems forming relationships
- Social isolation
- Physical complaints

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Development & Reactions to Loss

Babies

- ▶ Attachment
- ▶ Mainly affected by caregiver's emotional state
- ▶ Feeding
- ▶ Regressing

Toddler and Preschool

- ▶ Difficulty distinguishing fact from fantasy
- ▶ Separation anxiety and fears
- ▶ "magical" thinking
- ▶ Curiosity about facts
- ▶ Display aggression, rejection, or clingy behavior

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School-age Children

- Concern for pressure from friends
- Concern about their own appearance
- Separation anxiety
- Magical thinking
- Changes in social behavior
- Feeling helplessness
- Difficulties with schoolwork
- Difficulty concentrating
- Display physical or emotional symptoms that raise serious concern
- Engaging in risky behavior

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Puberty and Adolescence

- Feelings of uncertainty about their role in the family
- Feelings of guilt
- Fluctuating between dependent and independent behavior
- Needing time
- Changes in social behavior
- Can have inappropriate sexual behavior
- Grieving secretly

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REFLECTION

Loss is a human experience that happens to everyone.

Each person think about an event in their life where you experienced loss.

Please share and event and how you coped with event.

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Providing Security For A Child In Care

► Promote Trust

- Accessibility but not intrusive
- Dependable
- Constant
- Watch for signals of need
- Ready to provide whatever nurture and protection is needed

► Provide Security

- Consistently available
- Anticipated concern and availability into the future
- Being met reliability from events like school
- Uses available resources to reduce stress and anxiety for the child

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Promote Reflective Thinking

- ▶ Flexibility
- ▶ Put yourself in the “shoes” of the child
- ▶ Reflects on the impacts of the child and self “why does the child behave this way?”
- ▶ Makes connection between past and present
- ▶ Observes and listens to the child carefully
- ▶ Provides structure for the child to think about themselves and their lives
- ▶ Helps child make sense of past and present

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Promote Self Esteem

- ▶ Full and unconditional acceptance
 - Gentle words
 - Tone
 - Letting the child know they are a subject of interest, value, joy, and concern
- ▶ Consistent messaging regarding child's potential
- ▶ Consistent messaging of unconditional acceptance
 - Positive behavior
 - Negative behavior
- ▶ Trust the child's potential for good

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Promote Autonomy

- ▶ Recognizing the child as a separate person
- ▶ Accepts, values, and promotes the child's need to be effective and autonomous
- ▶ Trusts in the child to make developmentally appropriate decisions on their own
- ▶ Sets safe boundaries without being too intrusive
- ▶ Offers choice, allows the child to take some risks that are boundaries
- ▶ Uses negotiation and co-operative measures to manage behavior-not punishment

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How can you promote family membership?

- ▶ The children can belong to more than one family
- ▶ Allow for the child to use own language
- ▶ Helps child manage membership of foster and birth family
- ▶ Include child in family rituals
- ▶ Making statements about "home" and "belonging"
- ▶ Being clear with the child about norms and values of your family
- ▶ Full inclusion with language and behavior
- ▶ Valuing the child within the family and life context

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Loss and Grief for Children in Care

Resource:

- ▶ Ms Liz Crowe BSW and Dr. Judith Murray
- ▶ <https://www.csyw.qld.gov.au/resources/dcsyw/child-family/foster-kinship-care/training/advloss-addnotes.pdf>

Loss and Grief for Children in Care

