

# LOSS, GRIEF, AND GRIEVING

Grief is a natural response to loss. It can show up as deep sadness, longing for the person, place, or thing that's no longer there, and physical symptoms like fatigue, body aches, or changes in sleep and appetite.

Loss does not always mean death. Children can grieve the loss of a home, a pet, a friendship, a routine, or many other meaningful parts of their lives.

Grieving is the ongoing process of adjusting to loss. It's not a straight line. Emotions may come and go, and healing takes time. Grieving means allowing ourselves to feel hard emotions and making space, time, and support for that process. Over time, the brain slowly adapts and finds new ways to relate to what has been lost.

## Supporting Children with Grief

- Create safe, supportive spaces for the child to explore and express emotions.
- Support strong connections with people who are still present in the child's life.
- Help the child find healthy ways to stay connected with what is no longer there (e.g., photos, memory books, familiar activities).
- Model healthy grieving and show that it's okay to feel and express big emotions.
- Watch for signs of unhealthy coping and seek support if needed.
- Use age-appropriate books, videos, or activities to help explain grief in clear, honest language.
- Reach out for support from family, friends, counsellors, healthcare providers, or community resources.

## Supporting Yourself

Caring for a grieving child while coping with your own grief is incredibly hard. It's important to care for yourself, too.

- Acknowledge your own grief and find space to go through your own grieving process.
- Take breaks where you can (e.g., step outside for a few minutes, go into another room to take some deep breaths).
- Reach out for support from friends, family, therapists, or support groups.
- Set realistic expectations. Grieving takes time, and there is no one "right" way to grieve.



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## Need More Support?

### Local Resources:

- Family Physicians, Pediatricians, or Nurse Practitioners
- Public Health Nurse
- Counsellors
- Art Therapists
- Nelson and District Hospice Society
- The Children's Grief Foundation of Canada – Finding Local Resources

### Resources Available at the WKCCRR Library:

- Goodbye: A First Conversation About Grief by Megan Madison & Jessica Ralli
- The Memory Book by Joanna Rowland & Thea Baker (Illustrator)
- Lifetimes by Bryan Mellonie
- Maybe a Whale by Kirsten Pendreigh & Crystal Smith (Illustrator)

### Online Resources:

- Kelty Mental Health – Loss & Grief
- Kids Grief, Canadian Virtual Hospice
- Helping Children Cope With Grief, Child Mind Institute
- Canadian Alliance for Grieving Children and Youth
- Children and Youth Grief Network
- Learning Through Grief