

Dealing with Loss and Grief

**HEALTH
GOAL**

• I will cope with loss and grief in healthful ways.

There are times in life when you have no control over events that occur. Something may end before you are ready for it to end. Something may happen to someone you know or to you. Although you might not control the event, you can control the response to the event. This lesson focuses on loss and grief. You will learn causes of loss and grief that teens might experience. You will learn about the five stages of loss and grief. You also will learn how to respond to loss and grief in a healthful way.

What You'll Learn

1. Identify causes of loss and grief. (p. 123)
2. Identify symptoms of loss and grief. (p. 124)
3. Identify the five stages of loss and grief. (p. 124)
4. Discuss healthful ways to respond when someone close to you is dying. (p. 126)
5. Discuss healthful ways to respond when someone you know is grieving a loss. (p. 126)
6. Discuss healthful ways to respond when you are grieving a loss. (p. 128)

Why It's Important

No one goes through life without experiencing loss. But, loss is an opportunity to respond by being caring and compassionate. It is an opportunity for each of us to reach out to one another.

Key Terms

- loss
- grief
- anticipatory grief
- out-of-order death
- invincible
- empathy
- five stages of loss and grief



What Would You Do?

Writing About Grief Suppose that your friend's sister just died in a car accident. Your friend does not want to talk to anyone about it. In fact, she pretends it never happened. Your friend's mother is concerned about her, because she does not sleep more than a few hours each night. Your friend is constantly doing something to keep herself busy. After reading the information about dealing with a loss on page 126, write a response to this situation in your health journal.

Loss and Grief

The feeling that occurs when someone dies or a life situation changes or ends is **loss**.

Intense emotional suffering caused by a loss, disaster, or misfortune is ***grief***.

Grief experienced prior to a loss is ***anticipatory grief***. It is the feelings a person has when he or she knows someone or something that is cherished or valued is about to die or change. No one goes through life without experiencing loss and grief.

What to Know About Loss and Grief

Causes of Loss and Grief

The causes of loss and grief include a change in the family, changes in living conditions, the death of a friend, suicide, the death of a well-known person, tragedies in the news, and the loss of special belongings.

Changes in the family Some family changes that cause feelings of loss and grief might include: death of a family member, divorce of parents, serious or terminal illness, or death of a family pet.

Changes in living conditions A change in living conditions can trigger feelings of loss and grief. A family member might lose a job or temporarily be laid off. The company the person worked for might close. There might be changes in economic conditions locally or nationally. As a result, a family's lifestyle might change. A family may go from having an income that allowed them to live comfortably to being strained financially. They may no longer be able to afford their house payments, and may have to move into a smaller house or an apartment. In severe situations, a family might be evicted from their house, apartment, or trailer, and may

become homeless or live in a shelter. Teens experience loss when these events take place. They grieve these losses. They might feel angry and depressed. Homelessness and poverty are major risk factors for teen depression.

Death of a friend The death of a friend is very traumatic. It is especially difficult when the friend is someone your age or younger. ***Out-of-order death*** is the death of a person that occurs at an unexpected time in his or her life cycle. Out-of-order death is traumatic. You grieve the loss of a friend and at the same time realize that you are not invincible. To view oneself as incapable of being harmed is to think you are ***invincible***. If a teen dies in an automobile accident or from a terminal illness, then you realize that this could happen to you. You come face-to-face with your own mortality.

Suicide A suicide is the intentional taking of one's own life. When a suicide or several suicides (known as cluster suicides) occur, it is especially difficult for someone your age. You might wonder if you could have done anything to prevent the suicide(s).

Make the Connection

Suicide For more information on suicide, see page 114 in Lesson 11.

Did You Know?

Holidays Feelings of loss and grief can intensify during holidays.

You might feel guilty because you are still alive. You might become angry because someone about whom you cared made this choice. You might feel sad and depressed. Most communities and schools offer counseling when teen suicide occurs. Teens need to talk through their feelings of grief.

Death of a well-known person Most likely, you have seen the reaction of the public to the death of a well-known person. This might be a politician, actress, actor, sports figure, or other person that the public has grown to know and love. Even though you do not know someone personally, you might experience loss or grief when a person dies. You imagine what it might be like to be a family member of the person. You feel their sense of grief and loss.

Tragedies in the news Most likely, you watched the extensive news coverage of the tragedies that occurred on September 11, 2001. You might have watched news coverage of wars, murders, terrorist bombings, tornadoes, floods, or earthquakes. These events can trigger feelings of loss and grief. You value human life and are saddened when life and property are lost. You have empathy for people who are affected by loss or death.

Mini-Review

1. What is anticipatory grief?
2. What are three causes of loss and grief?
3. What are the five stages of loss and grief?

Symptoms of Loss and Grief

Symptoms of loss and grief include the following:

- numbness
- shock
- loss of appetite
- intestinal upsets
- sleep disturbances
- loss of energy
- shortness of breath
- confusion
- crying spells
- moodiness
- outbursts of anger
- depression

Empathy is the ability to share in another person's emotions or feelings. Your empathy for others can cause you to experience loss and grief.

The end of something special Did you know that you also might experience loss and grief when something ends? For example, one day you will graduate from high school. This will end a period of your life that has been special. Even though you look forward to your future, you may have feelings of grief and loss. You are sad that you are leaving your school and your friends. Your parents or guardian might experience a similar loss when you move away from home. They experience emptiness because you are not there. They long for the days when you lived together and shared daily events. Yet, they look forward to sharing new opportunities with you.

The Five Stages of Loss and Grief

What happens when teens experience loss and grief? Teens will experience a variety of emotions that must be worked through before they can accept what has happened to them.

The **five stages of loss and grief** are psychological stages of grieving that include denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Refer to page 109 in Lesson 11 for definitions of the stages.

The amount of time you might spend in each stage of loss and grief will vary. You might backslide. For example, you might work through your feelings and gain acceptance, only to backslide to feeling depressed.

Drug and Alcohol Use and Loss and Grief

Or you might skip one stage and move to the next stage. Some teens get stuck in one of the five stages of loss and grief. Teens who become stuck in one of the five stages of loss and grief usually need help. These teens are unable to deal with the loss on their own. Therapists can help teens work through their feelings.

Dealing with a terminal illness The five-step grieving process can be illustrated by the example of people with terminal illnesses. If people are told by a doctor that they have a terminal illness, they may first refuse to believe that they are dying. They pretend that the information the doctor told them is wrong.

The second stage is anger. People with a terminal illness in this stage may direct their anger at their family, friends, physicians, or other medical professionals.

Anger can turn into bargaining. People who are dying try to avoid death by making deals and promises. When they realize bargaining will not change the outcome, they become depressed. Once a person who is terminally ill accepts that he or she is dying, he or she begins to say goodbye, share special feelings and thoughts with loved ones, and tries to enjoy the remainder of his or her life.

Different people may spend different amounts of time in each of the stages. Some people progress through the stages, while others get stuck or go backward. Family members and friends of people with terminal illnesses may go through similar stages of loss and grief.

When a person suffers a loss, whether it is the death of a close friend or a move to a new location, he or she will commonly have feelings of grief.

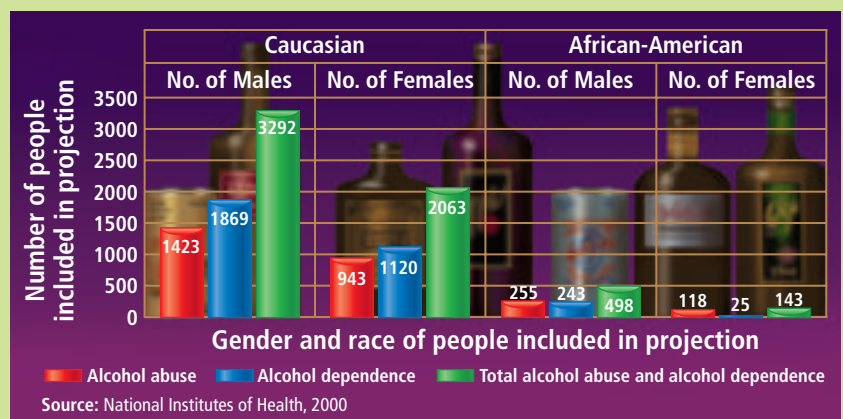
Some people might self-medicate in an attempt to feel better or to escape the feelings of grief. Using alcohol or other drugs as a coping mechanism for feelings of grief is not a solution. Although these substances might produce a temporary feeling of relief, these substances will not help a person get through the grieving process. The feelings of grief remain after the effects of the drugs have worn off. In many cases, these substances actually may make a person feel worse, emotionally and physically, after their use.

Positive ways to cope with grief include talking about your feelings with people whom you trust. Expressing your feelings in writing, such as keeping a journal, can help as well. Grief counseling with a professional counselor or therapist also can be helpful for someone who is struggling with the grieving process.



Visit healthmh.com/grief for more information on how to deal with grief.

Projections of Alcohol Abuse and Dependence in the U.S.

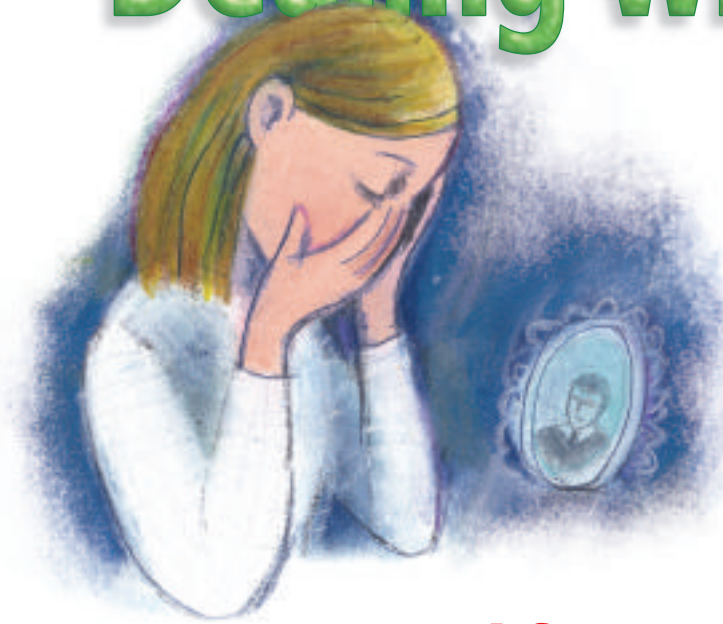


Analyzing Graphs

Study the graph above and answer these questions.

1. Which group is projected to have the greatest number of people with alcohol dependence?
2. Which group is projected to have the least number of people abuse alcohol?

Dealing with a Loss



The response to loss and grief differs based on who we are, whom or what we have lost, and how much our day-to-day life is changed. The following information provides guidelines for responding when someone close to you is dying, when someone whom you know is grieving a loss, and when you are grieving a loss. Remember, everyone responds to loss and grief in his or her own way. If you have questions about your responses or those of someone else, talk to your parent, guardian, mentor, or other trusted adult.

Healthful Ways to Respond to a Loss

Make the Connection

Listening Skills For more information on using active listening skills, see page 41 in Lesson 5.

When someone close to you is dying

When this happens, both you and the person who is dying experience anticipatory grief. The person who is dying grieves the loss of his or her life. You grieve the loss of the person you care about or love. The time you have left to be together and share becomes very special. You can make wise use of the precious moments you have.

Suppose the person about whom

you care is in a coma. The time you have left to be together and share is very important. Frequent visits may be helpful to you and to the person who is dying. Many people who have come out of a coma remember words spoken to them. They also remember being comforted. You might hold this person's hand and speak to him or her. Expressing your feelings can help you and the person who is in a coma.

What to Do if Someone You Know is Dying

There are many ways you can show your love for someone who is dying:

- Spend time with the friend or family.
- Share your loving feelings and memories.
- Share your feelings of loss and pain.
- Encourage the person to talk about his or her death.
- Listen carefully to the person's feelings and thoughts about the past, present, and future.
- Reassure the person with affection, hold hands, or hug.
- Share your grief with family members and friends.
- Continue your daily routine if possible.
- Consider what you will do to keep alive the memory of the person.
- Allow yourself time to grieve.

When someone you know is grieving a loss

You may know someone who is grieving the loss of a close friend or loved one. You also can comfort this person. Make yourself available. Remember, friends support one another during difficult times. Another way to comfort the person is to do something thoughtful for the person. You might send a card or call the person. You might offer to help the person with meals or errands. You can show your support for someone who is grieving by attending memorial services, with permission of your parents or guardian.



Just the FACTS: LOSS AND GRIEF

“If a person doesn’t cry, is he or she really grieving?”

The FACTS There are no rules about grieving and no “right” way to grieve. Each person experiences grief in his or her own way. Trying to behave according to the expectations of others during this difficult time only adds more stress to the situation. Some people suffer greatly, but they might express their feelings through art, writing, exercise, or another outlet. Other people, especially teenagers, might enter a state of denial and feel numb for weeks or months after a death or another loss. As the numbness fades, they may need support as they deal with their feelings.

“Are people who cry after losing a loved one—or even a pet—weak?”

The FACTS This myth is the opposite of the first one—and just as hurtful. Crying is a healthful way to express emotions and helps to release bottled-up tension. Trying too hard to control painful emotions can block healing and make the process take longer. At the same time, there is no “correct” schedule for grieving. People let go of a loved one or pet or recover from another loss in different ways and are ready to let go at different times.

“Does talking about a loss only make things worse?”

The FACTS Talking about a loss helps people begin to accept the new reality. If you know people who are grieving, encourage them to tell you about the loss, including what happened, when it occurred, how they reacted, and how they feel now. Invite them to share their memories of the person or pet. If everyone avoids the subject and pretends that nothing happened, a grieving person feels alone. He or she may think that no one else cared about the individual or pet who is gone. The grieving person also may begin to think that something is wrong with him or her because only he or she feels sad about the loss. This isolation can add to the person’s grief.

Have empathy for the person’s loss. Do not lessen the loss by making statements such as, “She would have wanted it this way,” or “He is in a better place now.” Instead say, “I am sorry you feel sad. I am here to support you.” If you knew the person who has died, you can talk about good memories you have of that person. Often, it helps people who are grieving to know that others remember their loved one. It can also comfort them if you help them remember good times with their friend or loved one.

Encourage the person to talk about his or her grief, and be able to recognize signs of grief that are not healthful. A person who remains severely depressed or who relies on alcohol or other drugs may need help. Tell a responsible adult if you notice such behaviors.

Remember that people deal with a loss in different ways. Some people grieve publicly, while others prefer to grieve privately. Some people grieve for longer periods of time than others. Some people prefer to recall funny memories about a loved one, while others may need time to deal with their feelings before they can do this.

When a loved one is dying, it is important to spend time with him or her, and express your loving feelings.



Grieving a Loss

There are many things people do when grieving a loss. Some people turn to unhealthy outlets for their grief. However, there are many healthful ways to deal with grief. You can manage grief in a healthful way.

Taking time to grieve will help you deal with a loss. Spending time alone doing activities you enjoy can help you work through your feelings.

1. Talk with your parent, guardian, mentor or other trusted adult.
2. Ask your friends and family members to comfort and support you.
3. Have someone stay by your side for a period of time if you prefer to not be alone.
4. Give yourself time to grieve, including some "alone time."
5. Express your feelings in healthful ways.
 - Give yourself permission to cry.
 - Use I-messages to express feelings (Lesson 5, page 41).
 - Use anger-management skills if you are angry (Lesson 10, page 98).
 - Use strategies for coping with depression to help with your sadness (Lesson 11, page 117).
 - Write your feelings in a grief journal. Writing about feelings helps relieve sadness and depression.
6. Maintain a normal schedule and routine as much as possible.
 - Return slowly to your normal activities and daily routine to avoid becoming too tired.
7. Protect your health.
 - Physical activity will relieve tension and will give you a feeling of well-being. Physical activity can also help you deal with angry feelings and frustration.
 - Moderate your intake of sugar and caffeine. Eat a healthy, balanced diet. This reduces stress.
 - Maintain your normal sleep and rest schedule. Go to bed when you normally would sleep. Wake up when you normally would wake up. Avoid napping when you normally would be awake.
 - Use breathing techniques. Inhale with slow deep breaths through your nose. Slowly exhale through the mouth. Repeat four or five times.
 - Avoid harmful behaviors as ways of coping. For example, do not smoke, drink alcohol, or use other harmful drugs.
8. Seek professional help if you are unable to make adjustments or have lingering anger and depression.
 - Call a crisis hotline, or make an appointment to see a counselor. See a psychologist to talk about your feelings. You might need to be treated for depression.

GRIEF

in the Media

Advocating for Health Every day on the national news, there is a report about someone or a group of people who have experienced a traumatic event in which a loved one was lost. How are they dealing with their loss? Create a pamphlet that explains how they can deal with their grief in healthy ways.

LESSON

12 STUDY GUIDE

anticipatory grief
empathy
five stages of loss
and grief
grief
invincible
loss
out-of-order death
suicide

Key Terms Review

Complete the fill-in-the-blank statements with the lesson Key Terms on the left. Do not write in this book.

1. A(n) _____ is the death of a person that occurs at an unexpected time in his or her life.
2. _____ is the ability to share in another person's emotions or feelings.
3. _____ is the feeling that occurs when something ends.
4. _____ is grief experienced prior to a loss.
5. The _____ are psychological stages of grieving that include denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.
6. To think you are _____ is to view oneself as incapable of being harmed.
7. Intense emotional suffering caused by a loss, disaster, or misfortune is called _____.

Recalling the Facts

8. What are some causes of loss and grief in teens?
9. What are the five stages of grief?
10. How might you respond in a healthful way when someone close to you is dying?
11. How might you respond in a healthful way when someone you know is grieving a loss?
12. What are healthful ways to grieve a loss?
13. Why might teens grieve when a well-known person dies?
14. What is the difference between grief and anticipatory grief?
15. How do tragedies in the news trigger feelings of loss and grief?
16. Why does drug or alcohol use not help a person respond to a loss?
17. Does a teen who does not cry grieve as much as one who does if the two experienced the same loss? Explain.
18. Why is talking about a loss important?

Critical Thinking

19. Why would getting stuck in one of the first four stages of loss and grief be harmful to one's health?
20. Why might a person experience shortness of breath, loss of appetite, or intestinal upsets after experiencing a loss?
21. Does grieving always involve all five stages of loss and grief? Explain.
22. Why might feelings of loss or grief intensify during the holidays?

Real-Life Applications

23. Why do you think an out-of-order death is traumatic?
24. Why might a person with a serious illness respond by bargaining?
25. Why do you think some teens feel they are invincible?
26. What are some causes of out-of-order deaths in teens? How could the risk of some of those causes be reduced?

Activities

Responsible Decision Making

27. **Role-Play** A teen's grandmother is terminally ill. The teen tells you he is uncomfortable visiting her because he knows she is dying and does not want to see her. Pair up with a classmate for role-play. Refer to the Responsible Decision-Making Model on page 61 for help.

Sharpen Your Life Skills

28. Comprehend Health Concepts

The five stages of grief may be experienced when a person has a loss. Select a situation, other than death, which causes a person to grieve. Write an essay explaining what a person in this situation experiences based on the five stages of grief.



2
STUDY
GUIDE

Key Terms Review

Match the following definitions with the correct Key Terms. Do not write in this book.

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. good character (p. 75) | e. loss (p. 123) | i. resiliency (p. 118) |
| b. empathy (p. 124) | f. mental disorder (p. 89) | j. self-respect (p. 74) |
| c. grief (p. 123) | g. mind-body connection (p. 95) | k. stress (p. 100) |
| d. life crisis (p. 109) | h. personality (p. 83) | l. stress-management skills (p. 104) |

- an individual's unique pattern of characteristics
- the feeling that occurs when something changes or ends
- techniques used to prevent and deal with stress to protect one's health
- a person's use of self-control to act on responsible values
- an experience that causes a high level of stress
- intense emotional suffering caused by a loss, disaster, or misfortune
- a high regard for oneself because one behaves in responsible ways
- the relationship between a person's thoughts, emotions, and body responses
- the ability to adjust, recover, bounce back, and learn from difficult times
- a mental or emotional condition that makes it difficult for a person to live in a normal way

Recalling the Facts

- What is a value? (Lesson 8)
- What are actions that show self-respect? (Lesson 8)
- What is codependence? (Lesson 9)
- What are signs of addiction? (Lesson 9)
- What are signs of hidden anger? (Lesson 10)
- What are the three stages of general adaptation syndrome? (Lesson 10)
- What are symptoms used to diagnose depression? (Lesson 11)
- What are warning signs that indicate a teen might make a suicide attempt? (Lesson 11)
- What are symptoms of loss and grief? (Lesson 12)
- What are the five stages of loss and grief? (Lesson 12)

Critical Thinking

- How are self-respect and self-esteem related to good character? (Lesson 8)
- Why does your social-emotional environment affect your health? (Lesson 8)
- Why might having one addiction increase risk for development of another one? (Lesson 9)
- Why is bipolar disorder dangerous to a person if he or she is not treated? (Lesson 9)
- Why is it harmful to use projection and displacement to deal with angry feelings? (Lesson 10)
- How can stress be positive? (Lesson 10)
- How can a person with dysthymic disorder have a second form of depression? (Lesson 11)
- How is being resilient related to good character? (Lesson 11)
- How is health compromised if a person gets stuck in the anger stage of the five stages of loss and grief? (Lesson 12)
- Why do some people grieve after the death of a well-known person? (Lesson 12)





Health Literacy Activities



What Do You Know?

Critical Thinking Work with your classmates to create a Top Ten List of Stressors. Form a team with five classmates. Compete against other teams to make a list of unique ways to overcome the stressors on the list.



Connection to World Cultures

Self-Directed Learning People throughout the world experience losses and life crises, such as earthquakes, famine, airplane crashes, floods, and deaths due to AIDS. Watch news coverage of world events, and select a life crisis that is happening in another part of the world. Write a news report about how the people are dealing with the crisis.



Family Involvement

Effective Communication Ask family members to participate in a family round table. Explain the five guidelines for expressing emotions in healthful ways. Then ask each family member to use an I-message to share his or her feelings about an event taking place in his or her life.



Investigating Health Careers

Responsible Citizenship Select a person who has a health career. Interview this person and ask the following questions: Why did you choose this career? How did you prepare for this career? What is the most stressful part of your job? How do you manage stress at your job? Share the information you gathered from the interview with your classmates.



Group Project

Problem Solving In order to improve the social-emotional environment, think of a younger person in your community for whom you could be a mentor. Suppose you were to spend an hour a week with this person for six weeks. On a sheet of paper, describe what you might do. Meet with a group of classmates to brainstorm ideas. Share your plan with your parents or guardian and consider acting on it. Visit healthmh.com/social_emotional_environment for more information.

Standardized Test Practice

Reading & Writing

Read the following selection and answer the questions that follow.

Can you train your mind to control body responses? With biofeedback, a technique in which a person gets feedback on body responses by viewing measurements on monitors or other devices, or hearing specific sounds, this may be possible. Biofeedback training has been used to help people deal with stress. Biofeedback works by closely monitoring body functions and displaying the measurements taken in different ways. The subject becomes familiar with the kinds of external forces that cause the stress. For example, blood pressure can be displayed on a chart or meter, while an elevated heart rate can set off a bell or alarm. Then, the subject learns to control the body's reactions to the stressors. Studies have shown that biofeedback is effective in battling not only stress reactions like high blood pressure, but also migraine headaches and epileptic seizures.

Multiple Choice

- 1 In this paragraph, the word *elevated* means:
A lower than normal
B higher than normal
C dangerous
D changeable
- 2 Which of the following is a reason why people might try biofeedback to cure a condition or disease?
A They do not like being hooked up to monitoring systems.
B They prefer to treat diseases with powerful drugs.
C Other treatments have been successful.
D Other treatments have been unsuccessful.

Open-Ended

- 3 Imagine you are developing a study to show the effect of biofeedback on stress. Write a paragraph describing a study you would design to test the effectiveness of biofeedback.

