



Virtual Resource Kit:

Supporting Children Through Grief



When someone important in a child's life dies, it's tough for any child. For children in foster care or kids who were adopted and have past trauma, grief can be even harder. Their history of loss and instability can change how they feel and show their grief, often causing a complex trauma response.

Complex trauma includes the deep effects of many serious and personal traumatic events. When a child with complex trauma faces another significant loss, their past trauma can resurface. This can lead to stronger emotional reactions, trouble in relationships, and a shaky sense of safety and trust.

For all parents and caregivers, supporting children during this time is vital. This Virtual Resource Kit includes several tools and services that may be helpful to you. We hope you will find the resources you need to help you guide children through their grief, recognize their unique trauma challenges, and encourage hope, healing, and resilience.

On the following pages, you will find a collection of resources to help families navigate the complexities associated with grief and loss. These resources include tip sheets, webinars, and videos that offer guidance on supporting grieving children and youth. Links to additional resources, such as books and web resources, are also included.

Tip Sheets

What Grief Looks Like for Children & Youth in Care

This tip sheet offers insights into the complex emotions that children in foster care experience and provides practical advice for caregivers on how to support them. Whether you're a foster parent, a teacher, or a friend, this resource can help you better understand and support the children in your life as they process grief and loss.

Foster Care, Grief & Loss

This tip sheet examines the multifaceted emotions of grief and loss experienced by everyone involved in foster care—foster parents, birth parents, and children. It outlines the various stages and symptoms of grief, including irritability and sleep disturbances, while also providing practical advice on coping, emphasizing the importance of open communication and patience.

Grief and Loss: Making Space for Healing

This tip sheet provides essential insights for caregivers on supporting children through the emotional healing process after experiencing loss, particularly in the context of foster care and adoption. Grief due to loss is a common and often unspoken experience for children in these situations. Learn about the stages of development and grief, how grief may present at different ages, and practical strategies for helping children cope. You will also learn how to recognize grief triggers and create a supportive environment that allows children to express their emotions safely.

Helping Children Cope with Loss

This tip sheet provides essential strategies for parents and caregivers to support a child after a significant loss has emotionally impacted them. It includes age-specific guidance on how loss and trauma affect children and explains why their reactions may vary. It also provides practical advice on creating a safe home environment and directs parents and caregivers to additional resources, such as books and training programs, to help a child heal.

Champion Classrooms Courses and Webinars

Grief & Loss in Foster Care and Adoption

Grief and loss are common in foster care and adoption. Each member of the family will experience grief and loss at different times, in different ways, and for different reasons. So, how do you care for your family when they are experiencing grief and loss through adoption and foster care? This training will give you tips and strategies for recognizing signs, symptoms, and triggers of grief. This training also provides strategies for processing grief and offers guidance on finding hope for the future.

Everyday Healing: Naming Adversity & Loss

How do we support children to understand and cope with some of the “tough stuff” they have experienced? This webinar explores ways to talk about adversity and loss at different developmental stages and considers ways to create healing moments within everyday interactions.

Recommendations for Further Reading

The Invisible String, by Patrice Karst: A comforting story about the unseen connection of love that binds us to those we care for, even when separated by distance or death.

The Fall of Freddie the Leaf: A Story of Life for All Ages, by Leo Buscaglia: Uses the life cycle of a leaf to gently explain the natural process of life and death.

A Terrible Thing Happened, by Margaret M. Holmes and Sasha J. Mudlaff: Addresses trauma and finding help to talk about difficult experiences.

Badger's Parting Gifts, by Susan Varley: A classic story about a beloved badger who dies and leaves his friends with memories and skills.

When Children Grieve: For Adults to Help Children Deal with Death, Divorce, Pet Loss, Moving, and Other Losses, by John W. James and Russell Friedman: A practical guide for parents and caregivers.

Additional Weblinks and Recommended Online Resources

Wisconsin-Based Grief Resources

- [Programming | Children's Wisconsin](#)
- [Camp HOPE: A free weekend camp for grieving children in central WI](#)
- [Camp GLOW \(Giving Loved Ones Wings\) | Wisconsin | SSM Health](#)
- [Agrace Grief Support Center | Madison, Wis. | Find Hope & Healing](#)

National Grief Resources

- [Traumatic Grief | The National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)
- [National Alliance for Children's Grief](#)
- [Foundation for Grieving Children | National Foundation](#)
- [Grief Resources for Kids | Dougy Center](#)
- [Grief Support Program Finder | Dougy Center](#)
- [Grief Resources for Family & Friends | Dougy Center](#)
- [Hospice Foundation of America](#)

Questions? Contact the Wisconsin Family Connections Center at 1-800-762-8063
or at info@wifamilyconnectionscenter.org.