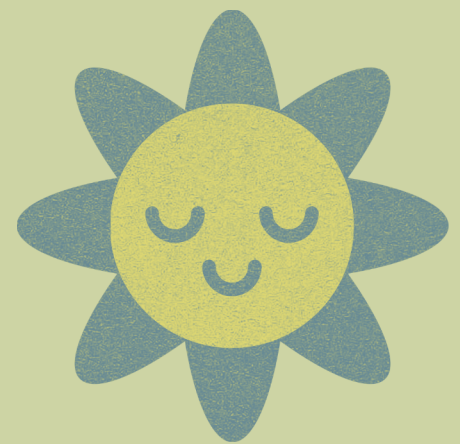


# UNDERSTANDING GRIEF



Grieving is a large emotional milestone that may take many forms; family loss, friendship loss, breakups etc. It is an intense feeling of loss, regret, or guilt and is a lengthy process to work through. It is very important you find the right coping mechanisms that work best for you. Grieving is a natural emotion and is highly complex. Work through this module to explore the complexities of grieving and how we can cope with our own feelings and support others who are experiencing these emotions.

## The 5 Stages and Beyond



Commonly, grief was thought to be composed of 5 'stages', denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. This model wasn't generated from scientific data. It's a theory, developed by the psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in 1969, that explains how people come to terms with their own impending death and the grieving process.

However, this model has been disputed due to the non-linear progression between stages experienced by many individuals. Stages may occur at the same time, more than once, or out of order. This is a reason many people have chosen to not use this model when coping with grief.

It is estimated that **1 in 14 children** will experience the death of a parent or sibling by the time they turn 18. In one year, **203,000** of Canada's 7.5 million children under 18 experienced the death of some in their extended family.

### Grief may present as...

Anxiety	Ignoring problems	Ignoring problems
Deep sadness	Emotional Outbursts	Emotional Outbursts
Alternative, unhealthy forms of coping	Lack of or excessive sleep	Lack of or excessive sleep

**Note that each person copes with grief differently and therefore might present differently.**

## Grieving and Students

Though grief may present differently in each individual, there are some common behaviours seen among grieving students, including:

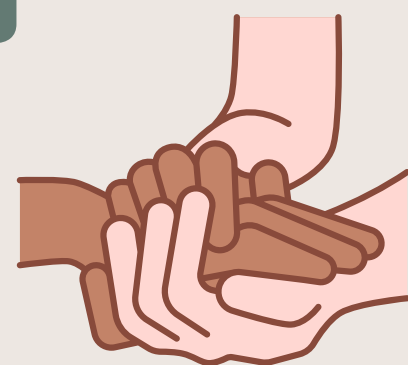
- Overworking
- Skipping class
- Low motivation or lack of effort
- Lack of interest in normal activities
- Not enough or too much sleep
- Neglecting self-care



## Forms of Grieving

Grieving can take many forms and varies from person to person. There are many types of loss.

- Loss of a loved one (death or illness)
- Loss of a significant other or friendship
- Loss of a pet
- Loss of something of value
- Loss of a family home or loved location



The best way to deal with a loss is to recognize it, face and accept your feelings and reactions, and get support during the grieving process.

- Don't judge your reactions. Be patient with yourself. Tears may come unexpectedly, even when you thought you were finished grieving.
- Talk. Share your feelings and the meaning this loss has for you.
- Pay attention to what your body needs. Exercise, adequate rest & sleep, and balanced nutrition are essential.
- Consistently take time to grieve, as well as giving yourself breaks from the grieving process.
- Pray, meditate, reflect, and connect with your religious and spiritual convictions and community.

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