

Putting Your Life Back Together After Grief and Loss

This group activity is focused on connecting with others who are dealing with grief and loss, and processing these feelings together.

Grief is the natural response to the loss of something or someone important to you. It is how your whole self responds to and copes with the loss. Grief is often related to a death, but not always. People grieve when losing their health, changing relationships, moving to a different home, experiencing trauma, ending an era, changing routine and much more. There are no rules about what is or is not okay to grieve.

Grief can include emotions, thoughts, physical sensations (heartache is real) and changes in the way you think. Grief and coping with loss is something everyone inevitably encounters and yet is completely unique to each person and situation. No two experiences of coping with grief are the same. Though grief is specific to every individual, it doesn't have to be processed alone. Reaching out during a loss can be powerful and transformative and can highlight the importance of building strong relationship and community connections.

Research shows that a helpful way to connect when grieving, especially with kids and teens, is through hands-on creative activities that focus on expressing thoughts and feelings. The Heartbreak Pot activity is focused on working together to rebuild something that is broken.

Heartbreak Pot Activity

When we experience a significant loss or grief, it sometimes feels like pieces of us are broken or that we have fallen apart. This activity honors those feelings that accompany grief while also reminding us of our many sources of support.

Materials:

- Small terra-cotta pots or one large pot
- Paint pens, markers or paint and brushes
- Glue
- Safety glasses

Instructions:

1. Put on safety glasses.
2. Carefully break, but do not shatter, the pot.
3. Hand out a broken piece or two to each person participating.
4. Using paint pens, markers or paint, ask each person to write something on the inside of one of the broken pieces. These can be pictures or words to express feelings surrounding grief and loss. On the outside pieces, write about or draw sources of support (e.g., friends, family, teachers, pets, hobbies).
5. Repeat step four until all pieces of the pot have words or illustrations on them.
6. Work together to glue the pot back together.
7. Use this rebuilt pot as a reminder that even in the midst of the grief you feel you are surrounded by sources of support and connection.

*adapted from changetochill.org

Change to Chill is a free, award-winning, mental well-being resource offered by a subdivision of Allina Health. Our interactive website is tailored to both teens and the adults who work with them. Change to Chill helps teens become more aware of the things that stress them out and equips them with relevant tools and resources to better manage stress and anxiety, so they can live happier, more resilient lives.