

MORE L♥SSES OF MANY KINDS

We've gone through a transition to a whole new way of life, almost overnight. Changes like this come with losses – and losses come with grief. We grieve these losses themselves, while the grief we already feel can be strengthened, and past grief can be triggered. (See “Losses of Many Kinds” for further losses, and how the losses affect children.)

As parents and caregivers, it's natural to think about supporting our children during challenging times. But to support them, we need support for ourselves as well.

So many losses are striking us through this time. We're grieving the loss of things we were looking forward to. We're grieving the loss of normalcy, of our daily routines. We're grieving the loss of being able to plan for the future. The losses for all of us during this time continue to pile up.

LOSS OF SENSE OF SELF

Many of us right now are navigating multiple roles, all at the same time, and even in the same space. We're playing the roles of parent, employee, teacher, and some version of amateur disaster-preparedness-coordinator, all together. When we're forced to wear so many hats, it can leave us feeling like we're not being successful in any one of these roles. And it can leave us to wonder who we are right now.

WHAT MIGHT HELP?

When things feel out of control, focus on what you can control. If you can recognize the things within your control, then you can establish realistic expectations for yourself and your children. Be present and in the moment as much as possible. It can be easy for our minds to wander to all of the “what-ifs,” but these worst-case scenarios typically cause a lot of anxiety with little to no control.

LOSS OF CONNECTION

On one hand, we're lucky to be living in a time of social media and other electronic ways of connecting with people. And, if we're living with children or a house full of others, we may be feeling a little *too* connected with



certain people. On the other hand, there are many people and situations that we're excluded from. Our social circles have shrunk significantly to the handful of those who might be in the house with us and the electronic versions of a somewhat larger group. Beyond this lack of socializing, this current crisis can leave us feeling alone in another way. It's easy to wonder, *"Is anyone else feeling these concerns?"* – *"Am I the only parent struggling right now?"* – *"Why can't I balance these things like everyone else?"*

WHAT MIGHT HELP?

Remember that you're not alone. There are many parents and caregivers who are struggling to balance the multiple roles they are forced to navigate at the moment. Remember that what we see on social media and other outlets is not actually a full picture of anyone's real life. Connect with supportive people who will share their true feelings with you and affirm your feelings in return.

GRIEF AND LOSS

While we may not be able to change what is happening in the world presently, if we're able to name our experiences as grief and loss, then we can more effectively work through the emotions we're feeling and get the support we need. Parents and caregivers need support as much as anyone right now.

And remember, the staff of the Highmark Caring Place are always here to support you and your family.

RESOURCES

CONNECTION: Be creative about staying connected to supports in new and different ways. While you may not, for example, be able to go to your grief support group in person, see your family and friends on the weekend, or go to the gym to exercise, there might be alternative ways of meeting your need for connection. Read more about grief coping alternatives:

<https://whatsyourgrief.com/grief-coping-alternatives-for-when-youre-stuck-at-home/>

CONTROL: Mindfulness is one way of staying present in the moment. There are a number of ways to approach mindfulness, including apps like Headspace, Calm, and Insight Timer. Children can also practice helpful calm-down techniques with apps like "Breathe, Think, Do with Sesame Street."



Read more about shifting your mindset to the things that you can control:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-right-mind-set/202003/the-most-powerful-weapon-against-covid-19>

SELF: While we may not be able to change what is happening in the world presently, if we're able to name our experiences as grief and loss, then we can more effectively work through the emotions we're feeling and get the support we need. Read more about the importance of showing compassion for yourself and others:

<https://whatsyourgrief.com/its-not-selfish-to-grieve/>



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