**Grief & Loss Handout**

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* Definition of Grief (*What is it?)*
  + “The keen mental suffering or distress over affliction or loss; sharp sorrow; painful regret.”
  + The process
* Definition of Loss
  + “The state of being deprived of or of being without something that one has had: the loss of old friends.”
  + The event
* Types of Loss (*There are many different types, here are a few)*
  + Death of a loved one
  + Breakup
  + Separation
  + Divorce
  + Loss of job
  + Loss of money
  + Rape/violent crime victim
  + Moving
  + Illness (loss of health)
  + Changing schools
  + Success (loss of striving)
  + Loss of long term goal
* Two main loss categories
  + Primary Loss – the event that occurs
  + Secondary Loss – Loss after an event or loss after a primary loss
* Reactions to Loss
  + Anger
  + Sadness
  + Tearfulness
  + Exhaustion
  + Apathy
  + Lost
  + Lonely
  + Hopelessness
  + Change in appetite
  + Sleep disturbance
  + Guilt
  + Abandonment
  + Lack of interest
  + Trouble concentrating
* Expressing Grief (*What affects how we grieve?)*
  + Personality
  + Circumstances of loss
  + View of the world
* Kubler-Ross: 5 Stages of Grief
  + Tools to help us identify
  + Not everyone goes through each stage in this order
    1. Denial: (shock, denial, numbness, how can I go on?, get by each day, begin to ask questions)
    2. Anger: (endless, transference, pain underneath, provides structure and strength, indication of intensity of your love)
    3. Bargaining: (making truces before a loss or after, “If only…” and “What if…” statements, guilt, bargaining with pain, negotiating way out of hurt)
    4. Depression: (deep sadness, feels endless, not a sign of a mental illness, realization that relationship is over)
    5. Acceptance: (not meaning “OK” with loss, accept reality of it, accept change has happened and adjust)
* Healthy Coping Skills
  + Accept feelings
  + Time
  + Share your feelings
  + Grief doesn’t last forever
  + Spend time with those who support you.
  + New Friends/Groups (if needed)
  + New interests (if needed)
  + Community activities/volunteering
  + Get rest, but not too much
* Unhealthy Coping Skills
  + Isolating yourself from others.
  + Fighting your feelings.
  + Getting stuck in anger, resentment, or blame.
  + Making any major decisions right after the breakup.
  + Coping with alcohol, drugs, or excessive food intake.
  + Thoughts/acts of self-harm
  + Thoughts/acts of harming someone else
* Other forms of Grief:
* Anticipatory Grief – anticipating grief before it arrives
* Complicated Grief – increasing reliance on alcohol, high risk behaviors, isolation/withdrawal, suicidal gestures
  + Indicators – prolonged idealization of deceased person, tenacious obsessions, substance abuse, lack of emotion