

Is Your Child Experiencing **GRIEF AND LOSS?** **RAINBOWS FOR ALL CHILDREN CAN HELP!**

Children experiencing grief have **QUESTIONS**.

Sharing in a confidential Rainbows peer support group can provide **ANSWERS**.

Children who experience the trauma and grief associated with losing a loved one are at an increased risk for:

- Learning, emotional and behavioral issues
- Aggression, substance & alcohol abuse
- Physical health problems

Rainbows for All Children has served children by:

- Providing them support and helping them develop problem-solving and coping skills
- Helping them manage anger and stress
- Reducing depression and anxiety

Rainbows groups present real-life lessons the children can apply in their own family environments and helps build resiliency of children experiencing a family member's:

Separation or Divorce

Death

Moving schools or homes

Big changes to family

Significant Illness

Incarceration

Hosted by:- Ladysmith Resources Centre Association

Who? Any child ages 6-12 (Intermediate Grades) who has experienced grief and losses

When?- 12 consistent weeks, dates to be determined
(must be willing to commit to at least 10-12 sessions)

Cost?- FREE for all participants

Contact?- Lacey Redding, Family and Youth Support Services Program at LRCA
250-245-3079 or Lacey@lrca.ca for more information or to register

To find additional groups in other communities, please visit the "Find a Group" feature on our website

www.rainbows.org

<https://rainbowsnanaimo.ca/>





LADYSMITH RESOURCES CENTRE ASSOCIATION

We Help Build Our Thriving Community



Rainbows for All Children - Registration Form

Child's Name: _____ Age: _____ Grade: _____ School: _____

Special Needs and/or Medication:

Other important information about the child we should know to best support them?

(Primary) Parent/Guardian's Name: _____

Email: _____

Mobile Phone: (____) _____ - _____ Preferred method of contact: *(please circle)*

Work Phone: (____) _____ - _____ call (mobile/work), text, or email

Address: _____

City: _____ Postal Code: _____

Also send communication to: _____ call/text/email: _____

What loss/traumatic event(s) have occurred in your family? *(please check all that apply)*

- Death of a loved one
- Parent or family separation and/or divorce
- Foster care experience
- Significant illness or injury, chronic health challenges
- Abandonment or significant loss of relationship
- Moving homes, and/or changing schools
- Incarceration
- Other: _____

When did this/these loss(es) occur? _____

Emergency Contact Name: _____ Relation to child: _____

Phone: (____) _____ - _____ Email: _____

Who has permission to pick up your child from group ?

Who is Grieving

1. Be an **active listener**. Use body language and gestures to show that you are listening.
2. Don't just sympathize, **empathize**. Feel **with** the griever instead of feeling **for** the griever.
3. Show **compassion**. Let the person feel their emotions and do not show judgment.
4. **Acknowledge** their grief, do not try to fix it.
5. Avoid looking on the bright side. **Do not** use the phrase "**at least...**" as this could show a lack of understanding their emotion.
6. Show **support**. Be there in person or just a phone call away.
7. **Avoid** sharing your own experience. This could devalue the grief the person is experiencing.
8. Sit with the person and provide comfort. Just **your presence** can help the person grieve and feel like they're not alone.

Healgrief.org recommends using these phrases:

"I can only begin to imagine what you are going through."

"I'm here to listen if you want to talk."

"What are some things that bring you comfort?"

"Are there times of the day that are easier or harder for you?"

"It's ok to feel this way, it's part of loving someone and grieving for them. What you feel is normal and appropriate."



Try to avoid clichés such as:

"Everything happens for a reason."

"He/she is in a better place now."

"It was meant to be."



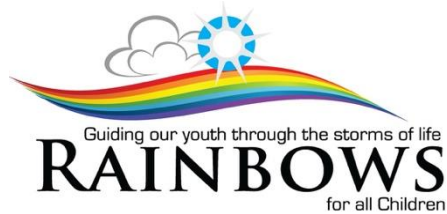
How to Accept Support When YOU are the One Grieving

1. Take people up on offers to help, ***you are not a burden!***
2. Help can be ***mutually beneficial***; the person who wants to help may also be feeling emotional and allowing them to help you can have a positive emotional impact.
3. If someone offers to help you with errands, childcare, or other tasks, ***accept the help***. They would not be offering if they did not want to help you. Don't feel ashamed; it's ok to not be ok.
4. Understand that grief is a ***process*** and it takes time. We all experience emotions differently, and it's important to know that what we are feeling is normal. Let yourself ***feel*** vulnerable, frustrated, sad, and any other emotion that is wrapped up inside of you.
5. Accepting help ***does not show weakness***. Allow yourself to know that people care for you, and their offer to help is not meant to make you feel inferior.
6. Practice ***self-care***. Take time for yourself and continue to do the things you enjoy (when you are ready).

If you don't feel like you need help, examine your reasons for not wanting to accept help.

- Do you feel undeserving? Why?
- Do you feel too vulnerable?
- Are you afraid of how people will view you?

Examining these beliefs can help you realize that it's ok to ask for and accept help.



Rainbows Level I

Parent/Caregiver Manual

The Rainbows for All Children 'Rainbows Level I' program is designed for children ages 6 to 8, or 1st-2nd grade.

Rainbows Level I aims to help young children speak about their feelings and share their experiences in a safe, small group setting. Through various activities and age-appropriate materials, your child will explore their unique identity and gain the knowledge of healthy coping strategies.

“What is a typical Rainbows meeting like?”

Gather

- ⚙ Facilitators may refer to the *Kid Connection* activity book frequently, if they choose to use that option, to aid in the meeting's activity or discussion.
- ⚙ The children and facilitator(s) will come together in a circle and briefly discuss the day's topic and how they can connect the topic to the children.
- ⚙ Each Gather section allows for children to catch up and revisit any changes that has happened between the meeting before and the current meeting.

Connecting Activity

- ⚙ In this age group, your child's facilitator(s) will utilize the tool of craft-making and/or activities to teach the overall lesson.
- ⚙ Activities are useful when conveying a complex topic to a child. This helps the facilitator explain the difficult topic in a child-friendly manner.

Song

- ⚙ Like the use of storytelling or crafts, your child's facilitator(s) may use songs or music to reiterate the day's topic.
- ⚙ Music is especially helpful to soothe or energize your child's mood throughout the lesson.

Think About/Reflect

- ⚙ At the end of each session, the children and facilitator(s) will reflect on the meeting and how to use what they have learned. Children are urged to bring their crafts/projects home and revisit their creations at a later time.

“How can I support my child before/after each meeting?”

- ⚙ Facilitators choose from a variety of activities, so those listed here for each meeting may vary slightly from the ones your child will actually do.
- ⚙ We discourage family members from asking children to share anything personal or confidential from their group meetings.
- ⚙ We do encourage being an additional support for your child and letting them know you are available to assist them and listen, if desired.
- ⚙ Just as facilitators will never force a child to share in their Rainbows group until they are ready to do so, we encourage you to listen when your child wants to share with you but also be understanding when they may not want to talk.
- ⚙ Reminding your child to use their coping strategies is also a good way to show your support.
- ⚙ Help your child connect to the topic of each meeting.
 - If you find it challenging to connect with your child, it may be helpful to look into additional resources for assistance.
 - The Rainbows for All Children website (www.rainbows.org/resources) has great material to read up on a multitude of topics (divorce, death, incarceration, etc.).
 - Example: Chronic/Significant Illness
 - <https://www.parents.com/parenting/better-parenting/advice/parenting-with-a-chronic-illness/>
Parenting With a Chronic Illness.
This article explains the journey of illness diagnosis and how it impacts the children and family as a whole.
- ⚙ Refer to the *Kid Connection* activity book, if your group is using it, and help connect the book's examples to your own family.
- ⚙ In this age group children can more easily comprehend a complex topic such as death, but they may need help understanding how it makes them feel and/or how to cope.
- ⚙ Reach out to your child's group facilitator with any questions or concerns you may have – it is also helpful to use this list of topics your child will be discussing to ensure their understanding at home.

Meeting 1: Self 'One of a Kind'

Becoming the Best "Me" There Is

- ⚙ Children will learn about their inner strength and how to put forth their best self.
- ⚙ Group facilitators may refer to the optional *Kid Connection* activity book to assist in today's meeting or use other activities to help illustrate the topic.
- ⚙ Connecting Activity: Me Mobile – a free hanging mobile to represent the characteristics of their personality.

Meeting 2: Feelings 'Inside Out'

Understanding and Identifying Feelings

- ⚙ This meeting will help children comprehend their feelings as an essential part of their well-being and learn how to verbalize what they are feeling.
- ⚙ Connecting Activity: Feelings Faces – happy/sad faces will be made using wooden sticks and paper. The facilitator will ask a series of questions where children are encouraged to answer using their happy or sad face.

Meeting 3: Divorce/Death/ Loss 'Why My Family?'

Comprehending Their Circumstance

- ⚙ Children will learn more about their loss through new vocabulary and be able to openly discuss their loss if they chose so.
- ⚙ Today's meeting children may mainly work in their *Kid Connection* activity book and partake in group listening/discussion.



Meeting 4: Divorce/ Death/ Loss 2 'Making the Pieces Fit'

Instilling Hope and Overcoming Adjustments

- ⚙ Your child's facilitator(s) will teach the importance of an adjustment period or transition after a loss.
- ⚙ Children will build on the last meeting and continue to discuss their loss or adjustment.
- ⚙ Connecting Activity: Picking Apple Pieces – Like a puzzle, children will add their apple slice to the pie (on each slice is a part of each child's lifestyle such as chores, family members, or school day).

Meeting 5: Anger and Hurt 'Blowups and Letdowns'

Understanding Anger

- ⚙ Anger is a natural emotion and is healthy to express when one feels hurt.
- ⚙ Children will be asked what makes them angry or upset (school, siblings, parents, fighting at home, losing a family member, chores, etc.)
- ⚙ Connecting Activity: Hurt Chain – Children will choose from a set of colored strips to create a paper chain focusing on the reasons why they feel hurt or angry. During this time, each child will be able to discuss why the strip they chose makes them upset. In the end, all chains will be combined to show that everyone has these feelings, but they come in many forms.

Meeting 6: Fears and Worries 'Facing Fears and Worries'

Opening Up and Discussing Worries

- ⚙ This meeting aims to help children verbalize their fears and worries, especially separating the real from imagined scenarios.
- ⚙ Facilitators will teach children that it is okay to worry and be fearful of changes in their life and will encourage them to discuss their worries with someone they trust at home.

Meeting 7: Family 'We Are Family'

Understanding Family

- ⚙ This age group has an established understanding of "family", this meeting will help children understand "extended family" such as friends, neighbors, and caretakers.
- ⚙ Connecting Activity: Thumbprint Family – children will share something about each family member while making a thumbprint using an ink pad. To finish the family picture, children are encouraged to add features to their drawings.



Meeting 8: Belonging 'Where Do I Fit In?'

Comprehending Bonds and Attachment

- ⚙ If parents separate, or one is absent for some reason, children may feel a sense of abandonment. Your child's facilitator(s) will reassure them that an existing, loving bond between a parent and child will never be broken, even when change occurs.
- ⚙ The facilitator will encourage your child to identify a person they feel closest to and where they can find them when needed.
- ⚙ This meeting will also encourage open discussion as your child will reflect on the person, or people, they feel most comfortable with.

Meeting 9: Stepfamily 'The Stepfamily'

Adapting to a New Family Environment

- ⚙ Facilitators will help children address their concerns with their new family setting, or discuss the "what ifs" to children who have not experienced a stepfamily, and talk about changes to the family structure in general.
- ⚙ Connecting Activity: Spoon Puppets – children will make spoon puppets to role-play their stepfamily/new changes that have occurred, and any resulting achievements and disappointments.
- ⚙ It can be difficult for a child to share a space with new family members, so children are encouraged to share their feelings with their family to get used to the changes.

Meeting 10: Acceptance ‘Endings and Beginnings’

Goodbye's and Hello's

- ⚙ Children will learn that through loss families will experience new endings and beginnings; it is helpful to work through this hurt as a family.



- ⚙ Connecting Activity: Wish Receipts – children will think of a few wishes they want for their family. Making a list allows them to cherish memories and reflect on their family.
- ⚙ Sad and scary endings/beginnings bring a wave of emotions, facilitators will comfort children as the group talks about memories of their absent family member.

Meeting 11: Coping Tools ‘Weathering the Storms’

Coping Strategies

- ⚙ Children will have the opportunity to talk about stressors they may have and/or fears about what might happen.
- ⚙ Your child's facilitator may use the Connecting Activity to work towards logical solutions/responses instead of emotion-based solutions.
- ⚙ Connecting Activity: Conversations About Changes – children will make cup and string telephones used to roleplay through various scenarios such as: “you haven't seen your other parent(s) side of the family since the change in the family.”

Meeting 12: Reaching Out to Others ‘Reaching Out’

Inner Strength to Help Others

- ⚙ Children will be taught to recognize their unique situation and that they may now be in the position to help others going through a difficult situation.
- ⚙ Children will be given the opportunity to express their thoughts and appreciation for someone in their life.

Helpful Coping Strategies for Children

Here is a list of activities children may do to encourage the development of coping strategies aimed at reducing stress and anger in healthy ways. Practice these with your child to build the confidence they need to process their emotions.

- ⚙ Help label/identify their feelings
- ⚙ Practice yoga
- ⚙ Engage in regular exercise/movement

- ⚙ Deep breathing
 - Take a deep breath in and exhale into a bubble wand
 - Inhale for a count of 4, hold it for a count of 4, then exhale for a count of 4, hold for a count of 4; repeat several times (4x4 or *square* breathing)
 - Bumble bee breathing: take a deep inhale and hum as you exhale
- ⚙ Take a walk with them and encourage them to talk about their feelings; talking with a child side-by-side is often easier for them than looking directly at one another, especially when talking about feelings or something difficult.
- ⚙ Create a positive behavior list of activities your child likes to do when they do not feel happy.
- ⚙ Create a homemade stress ball:
 - stuff a balloon with Play-Doh, dried lentil beans, corn syrup, or a homemade dough and tie it off;
 - decorate to your liking.
- ⚙ Have them practice *legs up the wall* placing their bottoms against a wall with their legs up the wall, arms spread out to the side in a T. This is a relaxation exercise when they feel stressed or angry.

Coping strategies at this age tend to be “Emotion-Focused” as the goal is to help process the emotion to avoid stress. By practicing emotion-focused coping strategies, children will be encouraged to develop “Problem-Focused” coping skills which involves taking action to avoid a problem in the future. This empowers your child to take the initiative to control a difficult situation.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness, simply put, is being fully aware of the present moment and one's surroundings. Being “in the moment” and not distracted by thoughts, concerns or memories from the past, or of the future. When children practice mindfulness exercises, it can help them stay centered in the present which can assist them in moving forward from grief and other emotions experienced after loss events or traumas.

Here is one simple exercise to practice at home, especially when your child is feeling anxious, stressed or angry to help them feel grounded.

The Five Senses Exercise

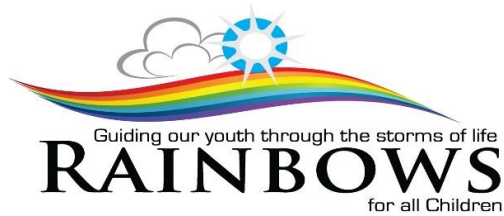
One example of a mindfulness exercise is called the Five Senses Exercise. The goal is to calm your mind by using your five senses to focus on your environment instead of your thoughts.

Here are the steps to complete this exercise:

- First, notice 5 things that you can **see**. Look around you and become aware of your environment. Try to pick out something that you don't usually notice.
- Second, notice 4 things you can **feel**. Bring attention to the things that you're currently feeling, such as the texture of your clothing or the smooth surface of the table you're resting your hands on.
- Third, notice 3 things that you can **hear**. Listen for and notice things in the background that you don't normally notice. It could be the birds chirping outside or an appliance humming in the next room.
- Fourth, notice 2 things you can **smell**. Bring attention to scents that you usually filter out, either pleasant or unpleasant. Catch a whiff of the pine trees outside or food cooking in the kitchen.
- Finally, notice 1 thing you can **taste**. Take a sip of a drink, chew gum, or notice the current taste in your mouth.

Source: UVM Medical Center <https://medcenterblog.uvmhealth.org/wellness/physical/mindfulness-mindful-monday-exercise/>





Rainbows Level II

Parent/Caregiver Manual

The Rainbows for All Children 'Rainbows Level II' program is designed for children ages 8 to 10, or 3rd-4th grade.

Rainbows Level II aims to help young children speak about their feelings and share their experiences in a safe, small group setting. Through various activities and age-appropriate materials, your child will explore their unique identity, be guided through the process of grieving, and gain knowledge of healthy coping strategies.

“What is a typical Rainbows meeting like?”

Gather

- ⚙ Facilitators may refer to the *Team Time* activity book frequently to aid in the meeting's activity or discussion.
- ⚙ Children and the facilitator(s) will come together in a circle and briefly discuss the day's topic and how they can connect the topic to the child's experience.
- ⚙ Each Gather section allows for children to catch up and revisit any changes that has happened between the meeting before and the current meeting.

Connecting Activity

- ⚙ In this age group, your child's facilitator(s) will utilize the tool of craft-making and/or activities to teach the overall lesson.
- ⚙ Activities are useful when conveying a complex topic to a child. This helps the facilitator explain the difficult topic in a child-friendly manner.

Song

- ⚙ Like the use of storytelling or crafts, your child's facilitator(s) may use songs or music to reiterate the day's topic.
- ⚙ Music is especially helpful to soothe or energize your child's mood throughout the lesson.

Think About/Reflect

- ⚙ At the end of each session, the children and facilitator(s) will reflect on the meeting and how to use what they have learned. Children are urged to bring their crafts/projects home and revisit their creations at a later time.

“How can I support my child before/after each meeting?”

- ⚙ Facilitators choose from a variety of activities, so those listed here for each meeting may vary slightly from the ones your child will actually do.
- ⚙ We discourage family members from asking children to share anything personal or confidential from their group meetings.
- ⚙ We do encourage being an additional support for your child and letting them know you are available to assist them and listen, if desired.
- ⚙ Just as facilitators will never force a child to share in their Rainbows group until they are ready to do so, we encourage you to listen when your child wants to share with you but also be understanding when they may not want to talk.
- ⚙ Reminding your child to use their coping strategies is also a good way to show your support.
- ⚙ Help your child connect to the topic of each meeting.
 - If you find it challenging to connect with your child, it may be helpful to look into additional resources for assistance.
 - The Rainbows for All Children website (www.rainbows.org/resources) has great material to read up on a multitude of topics (divorce, death, incarceration, etc.).
 - Example: Deployment
 - <https://www.uso.org/stories/2279-8-things-for-military-kids>
8 Best Things to Do with Your Kids When Your Spouse is Deployed
this article is a great resource to boost family cohesion before or after a parent is deployed.
- ⚙ Refer to the *Team Time* activity book, if your group is using it, and help connect the book's examples to your own family.
- ⚙ At this age children are more likely to comprehend a complex topic such as death, but they may need help understanding how it makes them feel, how to process their feelings, and what strategies they can use to cope.
- ⚙ Reach out to your child's group facilitator with any questions or concerns you may have – it is also helpful to attain a list of topics your child will be discussing to ensure their understanding at home.

Meeting 1: Self 'One of a Kind'

Becoming the Best "Me" There Is

- ⚙ Children will learn about their inner strength and how to put forth their best self.
- ⚙ Group facilitators may refer to the optional *Team Time* activity book to assist in today's meeting or use other activities to help illustrate the topic.
- ⚙ Connecting Activity: Me Puppet – children will create a puppet that reflects their personality, interests, and physical characteristics.

Meeting 2: Feelings 'Inside Out'

Understanding and Identifying Feelings

- ⚙ This meeting will help children comprehend their feelings as an essential part of their well-being and learn how to verbalize what they are feeling.
- ⚙ Connecting Activity: Park It Here – each child takes a turn to toss a bean bag toward a square depicting a feeling. When the bag lands on a feeling your child will have the opportunity to talk about a time they felt that feeling.

Meeting 3: Divorce/Death/ Loss 1 'Why My Family?'

Comprehending Their Circumstance

- ⚙ Facilitators will teach more about loss through new vocabulary and children will be able to openly discuss their loss if they chose so.
- ⚙ Connecting Activity: Family Bookmark – children will make bookmarks with the initials of each family member, including stepfamily if applicable.



Meeting 4: Divorce/ Death/ Loss 2 'Making the Pieces Fit'

Instilling Hope and Overcoming Adjustments

- ⚙ Children may use their *Team Time* activity book to write down ways they feel confident about themselves or participate in other similar activities.
- ⚙ Your child will have the opportunity to discuss what change has happened to their family or share which change has been hardest for them.

Meeting 5: Anger and Hurt 'Blowups and Letdowns'

Understanding Anger

- ⚙ Letting hurt build up will lead to a burst of anger, children will be taught about addressing hurt in a calm way will resolve anger.
- ⚙ If anger is felt, children will be reassured that it is a normal feeling after a big change has happened to a family.

Meeting 6: Fears and Worries 'Facing Fears and Worries'

Opening Up and Discussing Worries

- ⚙ This meeting aims to help children verbalize their fears and worries, especially separating real from imagined scenarios.
- ⚙ During this meeting, children will spend most of their time utilizing their *Team Time* activity books or using other activities to help work through scenarios.

- ⊗ Children are encouraged to speak about their fears and worries as a group and how to separate real from unrealistic problems.

Meeting 7: Family ‘We Are Family’

Understanding Family



- ⊗ Children this age have a concrete understanding of what ‘family’ is and means to them. Children will be reassured of their contribution to a family, even after a significant life change.
- ⊗ Children will explore the people outside of their immediate family who are important to them; children will also explore different types of families (single-parent vs. two-parent households, for example).
- ⊗ Connecting Activity: Magnet Family – children will assemble a ‘Magnet Family’ by attaching the names or illustrations of each family member to a banner with their family name written on it.

Meeting 8: Belonging ‘Where Do I Fit In?’

Comprehending Bonds and Attachment

- ⊗ If parents separate, or one is absent for some reason, children may feel a sense of abandonment. Your child’s facilitator(s) will reassure them that an existing, loving bond between a parent and child will never be broken, even when change occurs.
- ⊗ Empowerment for a child is important for their development as an independent person; empowerment is also utilized for understanding where one belongs in a family.

Meeting 9: Stepfamily ‘A New Look for My Family’

Adapting to a New Family Environment

- ⊗ Facilitators will help children address their concerns to adapting to new family members or other changes in their family structure.
- ⊗ Children are encouraged to accept their stepparent as a person who will help them along their journey of growing up (if relevant to their loss).
- ⊗ Connecting Activity: Finger Family – children will be assigned roles to play in a puppet show (parent, stepparent, child, etc.) and play through various scenarios surrounding the topic of a stepfamily, or other changes in families.
- ⊗ If your child is not or will not be a part of a stepfamily, facilitators will ask them to be open-minded about the concept and will utilize other changes in discussion.



Meeting 10: Acceptance ‘Endings and Beginnings’

Goodbye’s and Hello’s

- ⚙ Children will learn that through loss families will experience new endings and beginnings; it is helpful to work through this hurt as a family.
- ⚙ The group will discuss and share their memories; this helps children understand that memories are good to have and soon new good memories will be made.
- ⚙ Connecting Activity: Memories and Dreams – labeled in each category, children will match a card to either a ‘memory’ or ‘dream’; discussion of their choices will follow.

Meeting 11: Coping Tools ‘Weathering the Storms’

Coping Strategies

- ⚙ Today’s meeting will teach children different ways to address a situation, develop healthy coping strategies, and learn to highlight the positives in their life.
- ⚙ Children will engage in role playing again to assess certain situations and problem solve.

Meeting 12: Reaching Out to Others ‘Reaching Out’

Inner Strength to Help Others

- ⚙ Children will be taught to recognize their unique situation and that may now be in a position to help others going through a difficult situation.
- ⚙ Children will be given an opportunity to express their thoughts and appreciation for someone in their life.

Helpful Coping Strategies

Here is a list of activities children may do to encourage the development of coping strategies aimed at reducing stress and anger in healthy ways. Practice these with your child to build the confidence they need to process their emotions.

- ⚙ Create a calming playlist of music they enjoy that helps them feel relaxed
- ⚙ Create a Mood Booster list
 - when feeling happy, have a dance party, tell jokes, or sing
 - when feeling sad, work your way down a list of things that can help you feel better
- ⚙ Engage in regular exercise/movement

- ⚙ Deep breathing
 - Take a deep breath in and exhale into a bubble wand
 - Inhale for a count of 4, hold it for a count of 4, then exhale for a count of 4, hold for a count of 4; repeat several times (4x4 or *square* breathing)
 - Bumble bee breathing: take a deep inhale and hum as you exhale.
- ⚙ Take a walk with them and encourage them to talk about their feelings; talking with a child side-by-side is often easier for them than looking directly at one another, especially when talking about feelings or something difficult.
- ⚙ Create a positive behavior list of activities your child likes to do when they do not feel happy.
- ⚙ Create a homemade stress ball:
 - stuff a balloon with Play-Doh, dried lentil beans, corn syrup, or a homemade dough and tie it off;
 - decorate to your liking.
- ⚙ Have them practice *legs up the wall* placing their bottoms against a wall with their legs up the wall, arms spread out to the side in a T. This is a relaxation exercise when they feel stressed or angry.

Coping strategies at this age tend to be “Emotion-Focused” as the goal is to help process the emotion to avoid stress. By practicing emotion-focused coping strategies, children will be encouraged to develop “Problem-Focused” coping skills which involves taking action to avoid a problem in the future. This empowers your child to take the initiative to control a difficult situation.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness, simply put, is being fully aware of the present moment and one's surroundings. Being “in the moment” and not distracted by thoughts, concerns or memories from the past, or of the future. When children practice mindfulness exercises, it can help them stay centered in the present which can assist them in moving forward from grief and other emotions experienced after loss events or traumas.

Here is one simple exercise to practice at home, especially when your child is feeling anxious, stressed or angry to help them feel grounded.

The Five Senses Exercise

One example of a mindfulness exercise is called the Five Senses Exercise. The goal is to calm your mind by using your five senses to focus on your environment instead of your thoughts.

Here are the steps to complete this exercise:

- First, notice 5 things that you can **see**. Look around you and become aware of your environment. Try to pick out something that you don't usually notice.
- Second, notice 4 things you can **feel**. Bring attention to the things that you're currently feeling, such as the texture of your clothing or the smooth surface of the table you're resting your hands on.
- Third, notice 3 things that you can **hear**. Listen for and notice things in the background that you don't normally notice. It could be the birds chirping outside or an appliance humming in the next room.
- Fourth, notice 2 things you can **smell**. Bring attention to scents that you usually filter out, either pleasant or unpleasant. Catch a whiff of the pine trees outside or food cooking in the kitchen.
- Finally, notice 1 thing you can **taste**. Take a sip of a drink, chew gum, or notice the current taste in your mouth.

Source: UVM Medical Center <https://medcenterblog.uvmhealth.org/wellness/physical/mindfulness-mindful-monday-exercise/>

