

# What Did You Learn About Grieving From Your Family?

## Objective

To explore what you learned about grieving and loss from your family and think about how you want to deal with loss as an adult.

## What to Know

This worksheet will help you will think about what your family of origin taught you about how to grieve a loss—what was helpful and what was not. We all have a tendency to “repeat the past” and act the way we saw our parents act. But as an adult, you can make your own choices about how best to deal with loss.

## What to Do

What are your earliest memories of a loss? Did a pet die? A grandparent? Describe a loss you remember from your childhood, noting what happened, how old you were, where you were living, and so on.

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How did your parents or caregivers behave during this loss? What did you see them doing or feeling? Did they cry in front of you? Did they ignore or minimize the loss? What were the lessons you learned about grieving?

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How did other family members or friends react to the loss?

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How did you feel reacting to the loss? What did you want or need that you did not get? What happened that you thought was helpful in understanding the loss?

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What did your parents or caregivers tell you? (*This may or may not be consistent with what you saw or felt.*) Did they avoid talking to you about the loss? Did they encourage you to express your sadness? Did they comfort you? Did they make time to spend with you?

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What important events do you remember related to the loss? What events were helpful in understanding the loss? Were there events that were not helpful?

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Now think of a loss you have experienced as an adult. Are there any parallels between how you behaved as an adult and how your parents handled grief when you were a child? Be as specific as possible.

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Who can best help you deal with your loss? Write down two or three names.

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### **Reflections on This Exercise**

How helpful was this exercise? \_\_\_\_\_  
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?

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