

# Grief & Loss

## The Ripple Effects of Loss

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PURPOSE OF GROUP: to explore grief & loss

MATERIALS NEEDED: markers/colored pencils (writing utensils for group members)  
big sheet of paper

### 1.

-Facilitator opens group by introducing topic, **grief & loss**. This is a difficult topic to explore, but we will do so today to better understand how loss affects us.

-Death has a “**ripple**” effect. The death of a person is a “primary” loss in our life, but there are **secondary losses** that occur as a result.

-**Examples** of secondary losses include:

-Loss of family structure

a. For example, a child who loses a parent no longer has two parents in the home

b. Someone who loses a spouse no longer has another adult in the household & may have to take on additional responsibilities

-Loss of companionship or loss of marriage

-Loss of lifestyle

a. For example, a mother volunteers at her child’s school, goes to her soccer games & dance recitals every weekend, hangs out with other moms, etc. A parent’s lifestyle (and social circle) changes if their child dies

b. Someone who loses a spouse must adjust to being single again

-Loss of financial security

-Loss of identity

- Loss of health
  - a. Depression, anxiety, sleep problems, eating problems, etc.
- Loss of the future you once imagined
- Loss of purpose
- Loss of joy, hope, love, etc.

-As a result of these secondary losses, people who are grieving often feel as though they have lost *everything* dear to them.

## 2.

-The group members will participate in an **activity** that will allow them to **explore the ripple effects of loss**, and it will also **normalize their reactions** to the losses they've experienced.

\*Before they begin the activity, ask each group member to think of a person they have lost

\*One-by-one, allow each group member to share who that person is & how long ago they lost him/her

-For the activity, have group members sit at a table. Cover the table with a large sheet of paper.

\*In the middle of the paper, draw a circle & ask each group member to write the name of the person they've lost

\*Around the circle, instruct the group members to **write the ways in which the loss has had a ripple effect on them** (i.e. write the secondary losses they've experienced)

\*After the group members are done writing, have each group member **identify & discuss some of the ripple effects (on the paper) that they can relate to**

**2a.** After the activity, you can ask the group members the following questions:

-Which secondary loss hit you the hardest?

-Which secondary loss was the most unexpected (i.e. not prepared for, surprised by)?

-Which group member could you relate to the most during the activity?

## 3.

-Facilitator can conclude group by talking about **the healing process**. When we are mourning a

“primary” loss, we are mourning for another (our loved one). However, when we are mourning a “secondary” loss, we are mourning for ourselves. But that’s okay! That’s not selfish. It’s necessary.

- Each loss you experience (as a result of the “primary” loss) must be acknowledged & mourned

- You must learn to adjust to a new life, a new reality, a new environment, etc.

  - For example, someone who loses a spouse must adjust to added responsibility

  - \*You can ask group members, “What new life did you have to adjust to?” and “What was the scariest thing about this new life?”

- One of the best ways to cope with everything is to **take care of yourself**.

  - Ask for help, confide in family & friends, join a bereavement group, etc.

- If there is time, you can end group by having each group member complete the following sentences:

  - Grief has taught me...

  - I know I’m going to be okay because...