

Let's Talk About Grief

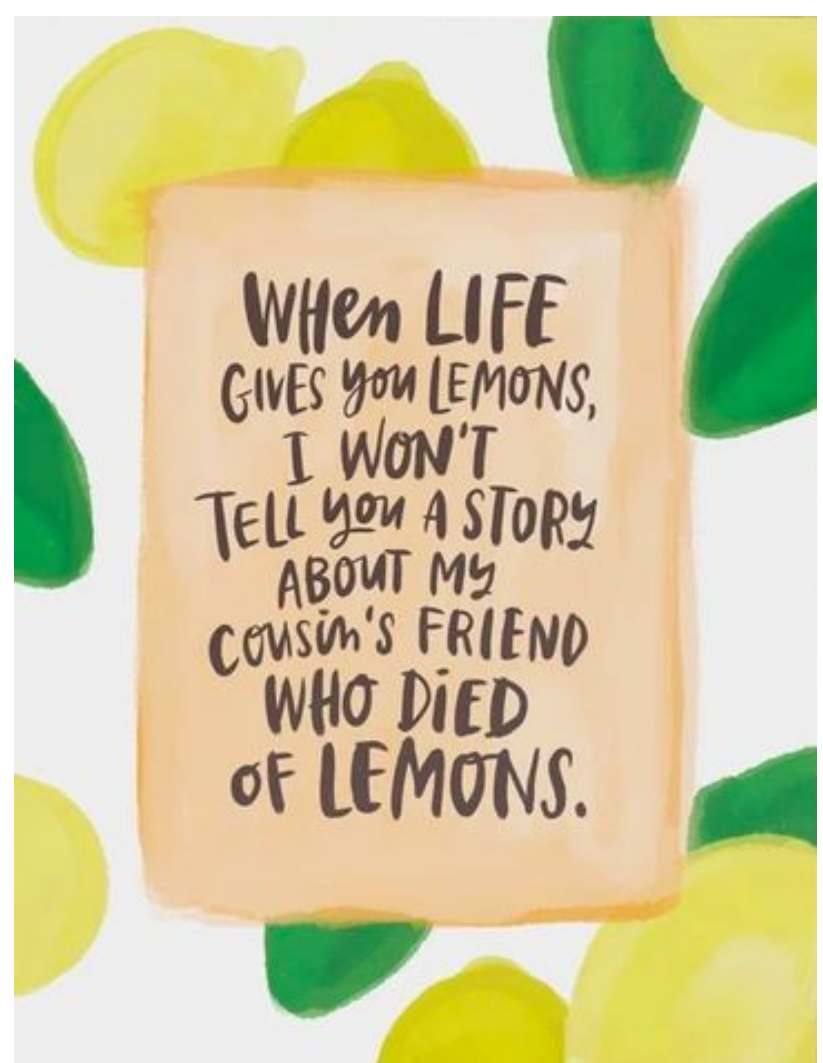
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WELL, THIS JUST SUCKS.
I WISH I HAD A BETTER WAY
TO SAY IT, BUT MY BRAIN
FEELS TOTALLY STUCK RIGHT
NOW. BUT I JUST WANT YOU TO
KNOW THAT EVEN THOUGH
I MIGHT NOT ALWAYS HAVE
EXACTLY THE RIGHT
WORDS, YOU WILL ALWAYS
HAVE ME. I'M NOT GOING
ANYWHERE. SO I HOPE
YOU'RE COOL WITH THAT. BECAUSE
I LOVE YOU.

Why are we talking about
grief?

Overview

1. Understanding grief
2. How to show up for someone who is grieving
3. Creating a grief-aware camp culture



First, a little bit about us and Experience Camps

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Founder & CEO + Chief Clinical Officer

**We give grieving children
experiences that change
their lives forever.**



**experience
camps**

The issue of grief is...

→ Common

- ◆ 1 in 5 children will experience a significant death loss before age 18 – and 7% of all children experience the death of a parent or sibling.
- ◆ COVID-19 is accelerating loss: researchers at Penn State and USC found that, for every person who dies of Covid-19, nine close family members are affected – meaning that 4.5 million more Americans are grieving right now.

→ Important

- ◆ Grieving children are especially vulnerable to negative outcomes such as increased anxiety, depression, and even an increased risk of mortality.
- ◆ When we talk about grief, we can reduce isolation and promote resilience, confidence and self-esteem.

→ Actionable

- ◆ By educating others and taking action, we create a grief-smart culture that has extensive ripple effects in our mental health systems and communities.

Grief isn't just about death

- Death of a person or pet
 - Cancellation of a life event
 - Loved one with illness
 - Child hospitalized
 - Natural disaster
 - Public tragedy
 - End of a relationship
 - Divorce
 - Job loss
 - Camp-celation
-

Debunking the Myths

Myth #1

There are stages of grief

Myth #2

There is a timeline

Myth #3

The goal of grief is to “get back to normal” or “move on”

How can you
show up for
others?



Let's start with what NOT to do

Don't say:

- I know how you feel.
- It will get better with time.
- They are in a better place.
- Everything happens for a reason.
- Be strong.
- At least...

**Don't try
to fix it.
It's not
broken.**

More DON'Ts

→ **Don't reference faith or religion unless you are certain it will resonate for that individual.**

◆ "God only gives us what we can handle"

◆ "The best get called home"

→ **Don't feel like you have to have a "comparable" loss. It's ok to not be able to relate.**

→ **Don't ask questions that imply blame or responsibility.**

◆ When hearing about a father's lung cancer, asking "was he a smoker?"

◆ When someone has died by suicide, asking "did you know he was so depressed?"

So then what CAN I
say and do?

When a loss just happened...

What to SAY:

- **Acknowledge the gravity of the situation.**
 - ◆ Oh Jen, that sucks.
 - ◆ Thank you for telling me.
 - ◆ I'm here for you.
 - ◆ Grief is so difficult. Please take care of yourself.
 - ◆ Take all the time you need.
 - ◆ I'm not sure what the right thing is to say. I care about you.

→ **Always. Say. Something.**

What to DO:

- Send a card
- Send a gift card for UberEats or a Goldbelly meal
- Attend the service
- Can I help you...finish this project, bring lunch tomorrow, research local florists, tell other people, etc.
- Make a donation in the person's name

Be present.

- **Sit in the mud.** Be where they are. Witnessing is a huge part of what helps to heal. When people witness your pain, it feels shared, and the isolation is lessened.
- **Rock your body.** Use good body language. Make eye contact. Look at the person. Stay attuned. Have a posture that shows you are attentive to the person. Just nodding and being present is huge.
- **Paraphrase and summarize.** Try to focus on what they feel and reflect back. “It sounds like that was such a difficult time for you” or “you were angry”.



Grief at Camp

What grieving kids say...

Sometimes I
can't
concentrate

When I'm at
camp, I
don't want
to think
about my
grief

Just because
I'm laughing
and playing
doesn't
mean I'm not
grieving

My person
died a long
time ago,
but I still
miss her
every day

I like
when
people
ask me
about
him

I don't
want
attention

I
sometimes
get angry
that he's
gone

I don't like
when
people
ask me
about him

I feel like
nobody
under-
stands

Ask me
what
helps

I try to be
strong so
nobody
worries

I just
want to
feel
normal

How to be grief-aware at camp

DIRECTORS: Talk with the camper before camp specifically about the death, how they cope, and how you plan to support them if in need while at camp. Make sure *they* know *you* know about the death and are available for support.

Listen



(set)

Limits



Look

(for warning signs)



#TAG

(Talk About Grief)

Thank you!

Drop us a line anytime.
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