

Grief and Choosing Other Feelings

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Adapted from the Positive Discipline in the School and Classroom Manual,
By Jane Nelsen, Lynn Lott, Teresa Lasala, Jody McVittie, and Suzanne Smitha
www.positivediscipline.com

Objective:

For parents to help their children increase their feelings vocabulary and also to develop tools to identify all types of feelings. To take it a step further and learn ways to choose other feelings by helping others.

Materials:

Paper
Markers
"Cards
Envelopes
Stickers

- **Comment:** There are four basic feelings that are a starting point for many children. Once children have identified their feelings they can better self-regulate and express themselves effectively. With parent support this may help them understand that they can handle all different types of feelings even uncomfortable ones, such as grief and sorrow. This may allow children to grow and learn skills that empower and encourage them.

Directions:

1. Remind your child/children that all feelings are important, whether they are good or bad. All feelings are ok to feel.
2. Ask why feelings are important and what do feelings help them know.
 - a. Responses may be: that you are loved, when you are in danger, how to solve problems or if there is something funny that happens.
3. Tell your child/children that most feelings can be used with 1 word or in 4 different categories.

4. Show poster (see attached) and point to the different categories and ask what other words are used for:
 - a. Sad. Responses may include but are not limited to sulky, depressed, grief and sorrow. Add grief and sorrow and explain that it is sadness felt after a loss or death of someone or something.
 - b. Mad. Responses may include but are not limited to angry or furious.
 - c. Glad. Responses may include but are not limited to happy, excited, joyful.
 - d. Scared. Responses may include but are not limited to frightened, nervous, terrified.
5. Have your child/children draw faces on a piece of paper or poster and have them color each category.
6. When they are finished ask them how they are feeling today. They can either point to the picture or if it is a poster your child/children can stand on the feeling category.
7. Remind your child/children that they can feel more than one feeling at a time and that it can be confusing.
8. Let them know that their bodies can help them learn how they are feeling.
9. Follow up and ask them:
 - a. What feelings might come up when you are crying? Have you ever heard of "happy tears?" Explain to your child what this means.
 - b. How might you feel when you laugh?
 - c. A tummy ache might mean that you are what?
 - d. When your heart beats fast, it might mean that you are scared or excited.
10. Let them know that when they feel grief or sorrow they can shift to other feelings and may feel many feelings at once.
11. Ask them if they have ever felt grief or sorrow and if they also felt other feelings at that time. How did that feel in their bodies?
12. Follow up and ask them to think of a family member that they miss or someone else? Brainstorm a list of what they could do for that person.

13. Ask them if they chose to do something from that list, how might they feel?
14. Let your child/children know that they will have the opportunity to write a note or make a card for that person. Allow time to finish later if needed.
15. Brainstorm a list together of some words or phrases that might be helpful to say to someone they love or care for.
16. Provide the following words or phrases if needed:
 - a. You are in my heart
 - b. I am here for you
 - c. Hugs from me to you
 - d. I'm thinking of you
 - e. I love you
 - f. Know that I care so much about you
17. Let your child know that they may use phrases from the brainstormed list or some of the ones above provided. If your child chooses to write a card or letter to someone who has died, they may place the note or card in a special place.
18. When finished, tell your child/children that all feelings are ok even grief and sorrow and other uncomfortable feelings. Let them know that they can talk about their feelings with you.
19. Remind them that there are people in their lives who care for them and want to know how they feel.
20. Lastly, share stories and memories of your own grief and sorrow and how you handled your feelings.

Feeling Chart

