Grief and Loss Outline

Loss is what happened. Grief is the response to it.

Grief often only thought of as an emotional response.

Also physical cognitive, behavioral, social and philosophical

Kinds of losses our children have suffered:

Primary attachment figure

Adult after Adult

Family

Friends

Childhood experiences - learn how to play, taught things like bike

Sense of Safety

Nievity- can’t let loose, not safe enough to

Developmental stages and milestones – emotional age not same as chron

Their home-multiple moves

Sense of identity – something wrong with me

Trust – abuse, neglect,

Culture – lack of connection to like people

Brain Growth – use dependent wiring

Connectedness

Pets – calming, soothing

Loss of a Dream-reconnecting with bio parents or sibs

Also experienced as loss

Health

Pets

Schools

Jobs

Grief is deeply rooted in our sensory system

The deepest losses for us seem to the ones with which we retained a sensory relationship….ultimate loss is primary attachment figure…relationship solely sensory

How do our children respond to these losses? Grieve

Different depending on Emotional Age

0-3 Even infants sense loss

Preverbal…hard to put words to grief

Experienced as only sensory

Abandonment and loss

3-7 years Abandonment and loss

Experienced mostly sensory with some

Cognitive components.

Guilt and magical thinking play large roles in the cognitive understanding

7-10

More cognitive.

Can do some talking about it. Realize cognitively that it happened.

Some sensory components. Fill in what they can conceptualize with magical thinking or wrong concepts.

11-18

Mostly cognitive.

Talk about grief.

May act out

Making sense of abandonment is more concrete with less variables than later in life.

Seen as more right or wrong, black or white and blame or faults are more likely expressed.

What does Grief look like in a child? List of behaviors…limited and look like other things

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Behavior** | **Delays** | **Physical Symptoms** |
| Refusal | Growth Delays | Hypersomnia/Insominia  Sleep issues |
| Regression | Speech delays | Eating issues  Hoarding/gorging/food refusal |
| Hyperactivity  (attempt to organize) | Motor Delays | Bathrooming issues |
| Attention getting | Cognitive delays | Failure to regulate |
| Chatter |  |  |
| Aggressive behavior |  | withdraw |
| Zoning |  |  |
| Repetitive behaviors |  |  |
| Magical thinking |  |  |
| Self soothing |  |  |
| Failure to regulate |  |  |
| Self abusive behavior |  |  |
| Sabotage |  |  |
| Lack of concentration |  |  |

Bowlby’s stages

Don’t just check off list and then done – Grieve at every developmental stage and Life event or Transition

Be Intentional and I.D. when your child is grieving

Ways Losses Manifest themselves in children