

Helping Children Cope with Grief and Loss

1.5 hour training featuring Dr. Alex Karydi:

<https://vimeo.com/weeproductions/review/515455073/e96878f9c3>

Resources to help:

- CBT-I Coach sleep app program ([link to app store](#))
- COVID / SEL / mental health / crisis resources (all Spartanburg / Union / Cherokee schools may distribute Sharpen courtesy of United Way Piedmont). Email Robyn to deploy to all parents and educators in your district (rfarrell@sharpenminds.com)
- COVID coping page on AACAP website:
https://www.aacap.org/AACAP/Families_and_Youth/Resource_Libraries/covid-19/resources_helping_kids_parents_cope.aspx
- My COVID Resilience workbook (<https://www.ohelfamily.org/workbook/>)

Best practices.

- Parents should model healthy coping, grief and loss at home
 - o Feel your feelings
 - o Cope with grief using healthy coping skills
 - o Decrease unhealthy coping such as using substances or food
 - o Take time to participate in family meals and remain connected with loved ones
- Get a proper amount of sleep (8-10 hours per night)
 - o Not enough sleep is a risk factor for suicide and other mental health disorders
 - o Try mindfulness, deep breathing, to increase sleep and decrease stress
 - o Use the arts or arts activities to decrease tension and provide an outlet
- Reduce online screen time and increase “real life” time
 - o Parents should enforce down time from electronic devices
 - o Parents should model the technology rules as well
- Create a safe space / coping corner that enables anyone in the family to enter the space for up to 20 minutes to have quality “alone” time or space away from everything. Think about adding Mindset Activity Decks (from MentalFitnessInc.org) or other tools that support resiliency at home.
- Build healthy routines and rituals. Even though everyone is in virtual meetings and school, we can still get up, get dressed, and add structure back into a chaotic world and life.

Political Grief.

There is no easy way to make depression disappear, but there are actions we can take to cope.

1. Focusing on healthy living will help restore your energy. Give yourself breaks from the news – and politics. Get enough sleep, eat well and get some exercise.
2. Limit time on social media or log off altogether for a few days. While it’s a way to connect with other people and share information, it’s also a key source of political

misinformation, echo chamber conversations and polarized thinking. Overall, too much time on Facebook or Twitter can intensify anxiety and depression.

3. Seek out social support. Talk to a trusted family member, friend, community leader – or find a social support group in your area. While that may be a bit more challenging in a pandemic, with the need for social distancing, it's still possible to pick up the phone, get on a FaceTime call or set up a virtual appointment with a mental health professional. Social isolation intensifies negative feelings, but so does spending too much time talking about problems.
4. Affirm the value of democracy. Electoral loss is scary because it means having to contend with unwanted or disliked policies – and can create extreme polarization. But accepting loss is part and parcel of democracy. One way to bridge political differences is to join a group, such as Building Bridgers, which brings together citizens with diverse political views to engage in structured conversations.
5. Once you've accepted the outcome, get involved with politics. Elections are just the start of what is a complex policymaking process. Participating is empowering and can help alleviate psychological distress. There are many ways to contribute, from contacting elected officials, protesting, running for local office or donating money to joining advocacy organizations or starting a political discussion group.