

# GRIEF & LOSS

## THIS KIT WILL WALK YOU THROUGH THE FOLLOWING:

- **defining grief and loss**
- **knowing the signs in kids/teens and adults**
- **how to talk to kids about grief/loss**
- **how to talk to friends or loved ones about grief/loss**
- **how to be resilient**
- **how to manage grief now/long-term**



# GRIEF & LOSS



## CHARACTER GUIDE

FINTON THE ORCA

### WHAT IS GRIEF & LOSS?

We experience grief and loss much like a "call and response." Grief is the response to losing or being separated from someone or something where a bond or affection was formed. It can even come from the loss of a way of life, or a place. We express grief in many ways, including emotionally, in our behaviors, and physically.

EMPOWERNAUTS

# GRIEF & LOSS

## KNOWING THE SIGNS

### IN KIDS/TEENS:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Sleeping problems
- Clinginess
- Anxiety
- Feeling abandoned
- Changes in behavior or playtime
- Feelings of guilt

## KNOWING THE SIGNS

### IN ADULTS:

- Increased irritability
- Bitterness
- Detachment
- Inability to show or experience joy
- Digestive problems
- Energy loss
- Nervousness



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## HOW TO TALK TO KIDS ABOUT IT

- **Make time to talk.** Sometimes kids have a hard time expressing that they want to start a conversation, so try initiating it yourself.
- It's important for this to be an **ongoing conversation** and checking in more than once to see how they're doing can help the process along for them.
- **Be ready to listen and empathize** with their concerns when they're ready to open up.
- **Try asking open-ended questions** like **"How do you feel about that?"** or **"Do you have any questions about that? I'll do my best to answer or we can figure it out together."**
- **It's okay to not have all the answers;** remind your kids that you'll do your best or find the answers soon.
- Be sure to **be honest, acknowledge their loss, and be patient.**
- **You can end the conversation by lightening the mood** about the topic at hand by bringing attention to people you love and care about or how to help others if they're going through something similar.

## A NOTE ABOUT SENSITIVITY

The information provided is meant to help those who need guidance and resources. However, please note that these topics can be sensitive to some and should be approached gently.



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## HOW TO TALK TO A FRIEND/LOVED ONE ABOUT IT

- **Ask to start the conversation** because they may not want to talk about it.
- **If they aren't ready to talk**, it's okay to let them know you're there if they want to talk in the future.
- **If they are ready to talk**, let them know you care and listen with acceptance.
- **Everyone handles loss differently** so, if your friend or loved one wants to be left alone, try not to take it personally.
- You can ask, **"What can I do to help?"** and do nice things for them just because.
- **Avoid giving advice or talking about yourself.**
- Keep in mind that **grief can last longer than a few weeks or months so, checking in every once in a while can be comforting.**

## A NOTE ABOUT SENSITIVITY

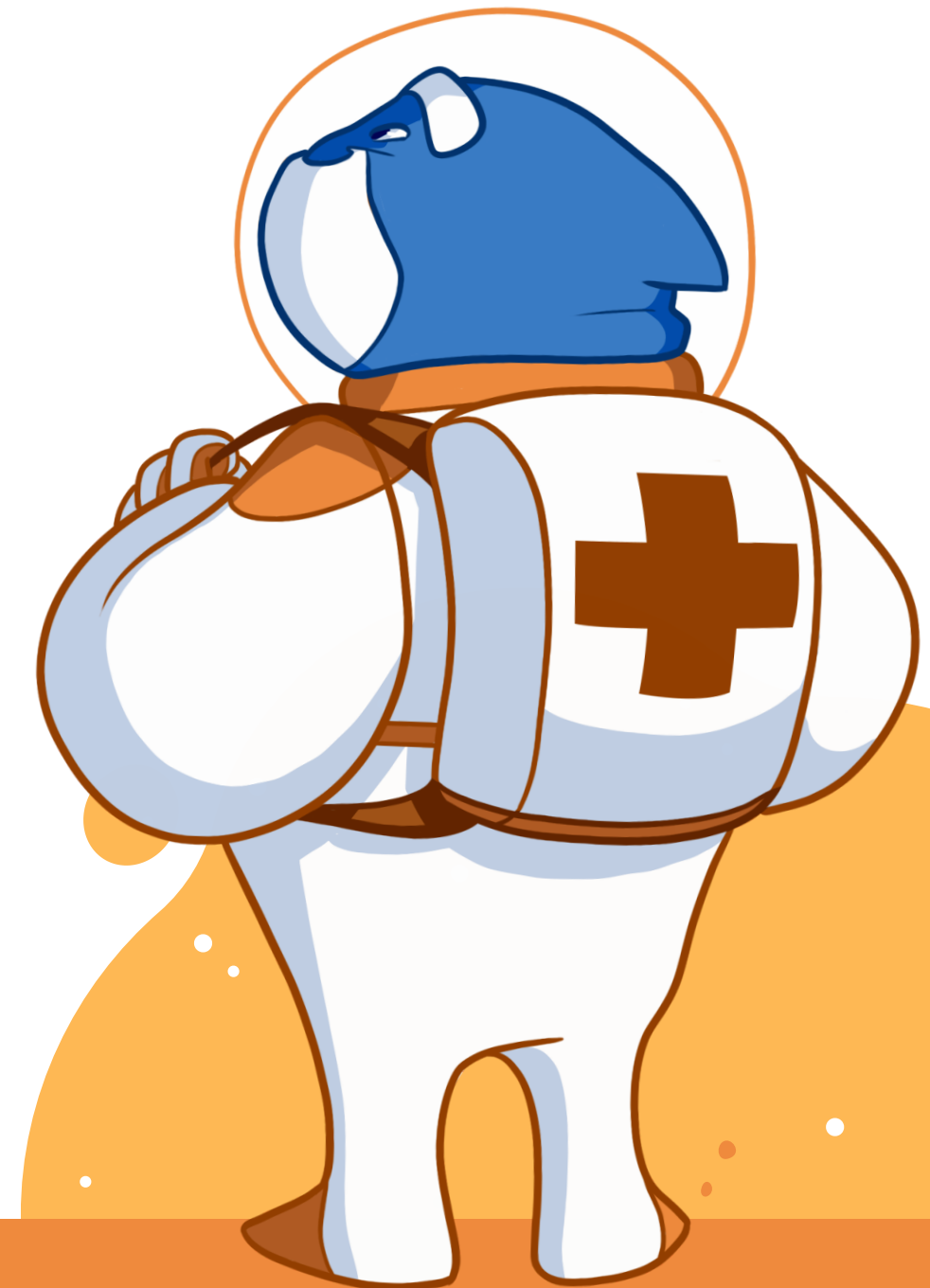
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## HOW TO MANAGE ANXIETY NOW

- **It's okay to release any emotion you may have;** avoiding emotions can lead to depression, anxiety, and aggression.
- **If you feel uncomfortable displaying your emotions in front of others,** remove yourself from the situation and find a place to yourself.
- **Acknowledge your emotions, observe the cause and reflect,** and **find time to be kind to yourself.**
- It is important for you and for others to find a **healthy way to let out your emotions.** Finding the best way may take practice, but you can try these outlets: **physical release through exercise or going for a walk, distancing yourself from crowded places or those you feel uncomfortable around, singing and dancing, and even crying helps.**



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## HOW TO MANAGE ANXIETY LONG-TERM

- **Be patient with yourself.** Grieving comes in many forms and may last a long time.
- **Talk to others and stay connected** – a social circle can help you vent or help you work through your loss in a healthy way.
- **It's okay to be alone at times**, but try not to shut everyone out.
- **Re-engage with your normal routines** once you're ready and feel free to add to it.
- Remember that **enjoying life is not a betrayal to who or what you've lost.**

## A NOTE ABOUT RESILIENCE

Kids are usually more resilient than we think, but only when treated with respect and care. See our **Resilience Guide** for more information.

