

# MENTAL HEALTH TIDBIT (BETTER INFORMED TOGETHER)

## MISSING HOW THINGS USED TO BE

DAUPHIN COUNTY MH/A/DP  
MARCH 2021 MENTAL HEALTH TIDBIT

There are a lot of things you might be missing right now; everything from activities with family or friends to in person school. Part of that sadness and discomfort you are feeling is grief. You may have only heard of grief in terms of death, but it is a lot more than that. Grief is the emotions we feel related to loss, even if that loss is something like your typical schedule or your sense of safety and control. Grief is a complex emotion. Many people recognize five distinct stages of grief. You may not go through all of them and you may experience them in different orders, but these are the common responses to loss.

- ❖ **Denial** is when you refuse to accept that a loss is real or factual.
- ❖ **Anger** is the emotion you may feel when you want control over your fears. Rather than dealing with the problem you might blame others and become angry.
- ❖ **Bargaining** is when you acknowledge reality but still try to maintain control. You might try to make deals about the situation and how it could be changed.
- ❖ **Despair** occurs when the seriousness of the situation sets in. You may feel hopeless – like things will never get better.
- ❖ **Acceptance** is when you finally admit that the situation is what it is. It is not great, but you have come to terms with it.

Most people do not like change. We worry about all the new challenges we might face. It is normal to feel uneasy as we leave our old normal behind. There are some ways to help yourself adjust.

- ❖ **Feel your feelings** – Grief is natural. Most people are dealing with it right now in some way. Letting yourself feel however you feel- angry, sad, or worried- is the first step to feeling better.
- ❖ **Practice mindfulness** – Mindfulness helps you tune into your emotions. These techniques can be helpful in situations where you are feeling overwhelmed. Try laying down, closing your eyes, and focusing on your breathing or go for a mindful walk, paying close attention to the sounds, smells, and sights.
- ❖ **Keep up normal habits when possible** – Routines help people know what to expect. Figure out what you can do to keep some things the way they were before.
- ❖ **Think ahead** – Stay positive by looking to the future and planning activities for the next few weeks that you enjoy and will help you feel better.
- ❖ **Stay connected** – Make time to talk to people in your support network, even if it is over the phone or through the computer. It can help you feel less alone and able to take on the changes you are facing.