

LOSS OF CONNECTION

Healthy people are wired for connection, something we all desire from others. And the quality of the connection is strongest when there is a significant dose of intimacy. You know you have intimacy in a relationship when you have someone in your life who knows a lot about you, accepts you without judgment, and loves you without condition. We can be happily enjoying the benefit of an intimate connection with someone one minute, and for many reasons find ourselves alone and unable to connect the next. This loss of connection may happen gradually over time, or in an instant.

Loss of connection in the We Grieve community is not loss resulting from the death of a person. Loss of connection may result from a relational breakup, divorce, or estrangement. It might have nothing to do with conflict, and simply be the inability to travel, meet up or talk. When you cannot see your friends and loved one's face to face, you are experiencing a loss of connection. The recent COVID pandemic is an excellent example. Sacrificing connection for the sake of the health of our loved ones is a painful emotional and relational loss. Loss of employment or career, or the death of a dream can create feelings of isolation and hopelessness.

A loss of significant connection can cause feelings of frustration, loneliness, isolation, sadness, depression, and anxiety. Losing a meaningful connection is a primary loss, and can surface a variety of secondary losses such as the loss of control, independence, meaning, purpose, and at times the loss of our identity. Our close friends and family do not define our worth and value, but they do add meaning.

If you find yourself experiencing these indicators of a loss of connection, give attention to the following:

- Remind yourself that a loss of connection is temporary, and in most cases may be restored
- Allow yourself to feel the feelings associated with your loss, and refuse to stuff emotion
- Connect with others often and talk about the various aspects of the loss you are experiencing
- Create new connections with others whenever possible either in person, virtually, or by phone
- Be kind to yourself, offering yourself grace without judgment for what you are experiencing
- Realize that a loss of connection is a significant primary loss with many secondary losses
- Take care of yourself in every way: physically, mentally, spiritually, relationally, and emotionally

