

# **DIMENSIONS OF CHILDHOOD GRIEF**

*by Allison Davis Maxon, LMFT*

## **A grieving child may have:**

- An apparent lack of feeling; numbing and avoidance
- Physiological changes; somatic symptoms
- Regressed behaviors
- Disorganization, panic and fear
- Explosive emotions; anger, bullying, rage, fear
- Acting-out behaviors; stuck in hyper-arousal
- Guilt and self-blame, based on egocentric/magical thinking
- Isolation, withdrawal, loneliness, emptiness

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## **HELPING A GRIEVING CHILD**

### **To help a grieving child, adults need to:**

- Allow children to be the authors of their own grieving experience by:
  1. Listen carefully {listen with your heart}
  2. Accept and validate their feelings
  3. Acknowledge their pain, sadness, anger, and give them outlets for expression
- Have the emotional courage to go through grief with the child
- Use simple, direct language; encourage them to ask questions
- Remember that healing is a process, not a single event
- Watch for physical responses to grief; make all feelings OK!  
"it's ok to cry and let our hurt feelings out"

# **SEVEN CORE ISSUES IN ADOPTION & PERMANENCY**

*A Comprehensive Guide to Promoting Understanding and Healing in Adoption, Foster Care, Kinship Families and Third Party Reproduction*



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