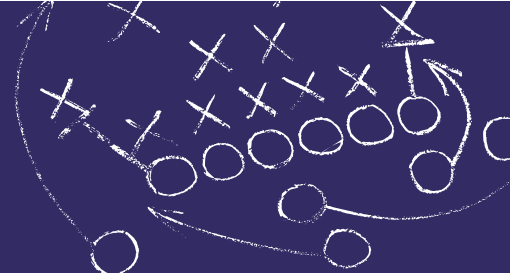


DEALING WITH GRIEF AND LOSS



Dealing with Grief and Loss

- It is common to experience a wide range of reactions to unexpected, difficult, and tragic events.
- There is no one universal response, nor is there a “right” or “wrong” reaction. Athletes respond in different ways.
- There is no one process of responses or “stages” that all athletes will go through. Emotional responses can be more intense at first and then subside. They can come in waves at different points in time after the event has occurred. Athletes can re-experience feelings later that were first felt at the beginning of the reaction.
- Focus on what you can control. Do things that give you a sense of mastery.
- Social support from family, teammates, friends, coaches, and others is an important buffer to persistent problematic responses.

Although each athlete will have an individual response when they experience grief and loss, there are some common responses in each of these areas:

Cognitive and Emotional Responses

It is common for athletes to feel several different emotions at the same time

- Anger / frustration / irritability
- Sadness/ grief
- Relief
- Anxiety / panic / fear/ worry
- Shock
- Apathy / numbness
- Confusion
- Guilt
- Self-doubt
- Difficulty concentrating

Physical and Behavioral Responses

- Tension headaches
- Muscle aches
- Fatigue
- Appetite changes or eating behavior changes such as restricting or overeating
- Sleep disruptions, or over sleeping
- Withdrawing or isolating self from friends and family
- Drinking alcohol or using substances
- Avoiding tasks

Sometimes these experiences can persist and lead to depression and/ or anxiety. Consider reaching out to me, another counselor, or your doctor, if you notice a cluster of these symptoms that continue to intensify or disrupt your daily activities, and/ or are present consistently for longer than 2 weeks. Reach out immediately if you have thoughts of harming yourself or someone else.