

For those in their senior year at the collegiate and high school levels, this is a special time. For high school students, prom and graduation can be defining moments of their generation. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, seniors may be feeling sad, disappointed and even angry that their spring is not going to look as they had planned.

The tips below will help in the conversations you have with young adults.

GRIEVING

Encouraging young adults to grieve the loss is critical and an important step. Young adults may want to jump ahead to either “fix the problem” or “be over it already” but by grieving, it will make it possible for them to transition into the next step.

Grief can be a tough process because there’s no answer or quick-fix cure. While there are the five stages of grief, most people don’t go through them in the same way or even in the same order.

Three considerations while talking with young adults experiencing disappointment:

- Resist pushing away feelings, instead take the time to feel them.
- Recognize that grief is more like a roller coaster than a Ferris wheel; there will be good days and bad days and in between-days.
- Be compassionate and don’t succumb to the pressure to “get over it already.”

SELF-CARE

“What psychologists know is that when we are under chronically difficult conditions, it’s very helpful to divide the problem into two categories: things I can do something about, and then things I can do nothing about,” says Dr. Damour.

You can’t avoid disappointment and you can’t run from loss but what you can do is decide how you’re going to react to the loss and that is everything.

Something that can help young adults while grieving the loss is to encourage them to distract themselves with activities that they enjoy.

- Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories.
- Take care of your body. Exercise, meditate, breathe!
- Make time to relax. Think about the activities you enjoy and do them as often as you can.
- Connect with others. Talking to people, while practicing social distancing, and keeping a positive outlook can be beneficial to you as well as the other person.

MAKE FUTURE PLANS

Remind young adults that some events can be rescheduled. And for those dates that cannot be moved, to think about the future. The current situation may prevent them from being with their loved ones during a meaningful day, but young adults will be able to see loved ones healthy for many years to come if precautions are taken now.

SEEK HELP IF NEEDED

If you visit with your young adult and are concerned about their behavioral health, seek help through the resources listed below:

- Find a behavioral health provider near you by visiting <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>.
- Call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline **1-800-273-TALK (8255)** The Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals.

