



Processing the Loss of Camp

Supporting our Children

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A Framework to Understand the Loss

The loss of:

1. Face to face interactions and consistent connection with their friends.
2. Shared experiences and routines that foster personal connections and independence.
3. Physical contact-what we need as human beings.
4. The opportunity to be goofy/silly and be themselves.
5. Leaving the stressors from school and home behind.
6. Specific camp activities.
7. The physical outdoor spaces.
8. A safe space to take healthy risks that stretch their "comfort zone."

How to Start the Conversation

Children are strong and wonderful people. Often, children look to trusted adults to provide a framework on how to react/ behave in specific situations. It is important to be honest and forthcoming with difficult information. Let them know that you are ready to talk, listen and just "be" with them.

Engage in Active Listening & Offer Empathetic Responses

Make statements to your children that reflect what you have heard them say or what they have said about camp in the past.

"I can imagine how sad you must be feeling."

"I have heard you say how much you will miss spending time with your friends."

"Hearing the news that SLC will not open this summer must be such a disappointment. You were looking forward to enjoying the activities and your independence."

Take Their Lead

Some children may be ready to share their feelings right away and some may need time to digest the information.

Both are 100% OKAY. You know your child best.

Individuals often communicate how we feel through behaviors. Take note of the behaviors. You may approach your child by saying "I noticed that you have _____. I am wondering if you are feeling sad about not going to camp this summer?"

Reflect

Prior to having the conversation with your child take time to reflect on **your own** feelings as an adult.

Perhaps you are relieved that SLC made this difficult decision for you?

Perhaps you are disappointed because you were looking forward to alone time this summer?

Perhaps you are angry because you are at a loss and don't know how your child or you will handle this summer without activities? Perhaps you are sad that you and your family are struggling through this difficult time?

These responses are all OKAY!

Initially, try to keep your feelings separate and out of the conversation. Eventually you can share some of your feelings with them, "I am sad for you-I know how much you were looking forward to _____". "It makes me angry too that you have to miss out on spending time with your friends".

Lead with Patience & Compassion

Your child may be experiencing a deep loss-something that they have difficulty identifying and putting into words. As parents it is difficult to watch our children experience pain. We may want to "fix everything" for them to have them smile again or just to avoid our own discomfort in knowing they are in pain. Know that instead of being the problem solvers we can model for our children how to slow down and "sit" with our feelings. Tell them that however they are feeling is "okay". If they aren't ready to talk you can reaffirm your commitment to them and to supporting them.

Identify the Good Stuff & the Opportunity to Connect

Maintain the connections that you have with your child. Playing board games, watching movies, going for walks, hikes & bike rides are opportunities to build upon the family connections that already exist. If possible work together to choose an activity to do together at least once a week.

Encourage your child to maintain their connections with SLC and their friends through phone calls, emails, texting and our Zoom activities.

We are available to support your children and your family through this challenging time.

Please reach out with questions, for support or just to connect and say hi.