It is typical for a child who has been removed from their home and placed in any type of resource care to go through a grieving process. We are going to explore the stages of grief, how children may express each stage, and the potential implications of each stage.
Any kind of separation from a person one is close to is experienced as a loss.

- May result in a crisis.
- Parent(s) are most significant loss.
- Siblings also
- Almost always results in a crisis.

Slide notes

Any kind of separation, from a person one is close to, is experienced as a loss. If the loss is great enough it may result in a crisis. The loss of one's parents is the most significant loss a child will likely experience, as well as siblings. Children who lose their parents almost always experience a crisis.
Family Case Managers should consider the following risks when making a determination to place a child outside the home:

- separation trauma
- further maltreatment if a child remains in the home
- maltreatment in out of home care

**Slide notes**

Family Case Managers should consider the following risks, when making a determination to place a child outside the home.

- Separation trauma.
- Further maltreatment, if a child remains in the home.
- And maltreatment, in out of home care.
Slide notes

Emotional responses to crisis, and loss are predictable. Theorists, refer to this, as the Stages of Grief, or the grief and mourning process. The five Stages of Grief are Shock and denial, Anger or protest, Bargaining, Depression, and Resolution.
The stages are predictable, although some other things are not. One cannot predict a person's behavioral responses, with in each stage, or the order a person progresses through, each stage. The process may be dramatically different for children of varying ages.
The Effects of Abuse and Neglect on Children and Families: Introduction to the Stages of Grief

Slide 7 - Heinz Commercial

The Stages of Grief

Slide notes
This slide contains the Heinz ketchup commercial. Audio/video content.
Let’s look more closely at each of the Stages of Grief.

- Shock/Denial
- Anger/Protest
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Resolution
To learn about the Shock and Denial Stages of Grief, click on each tab below.

- **Description:** This stage may last from a few hours to a few days. A person may appear compliant or disconnected, as if the loss is not important. They may deny the event or feelings they have regarding the event.

- **Behavioral Expression:** Children may appear to be indifferent. They may not show any emotional reaction to the removal, or move to a new home. Children may appear to go through the motions of normal activity, with lack of commitment to anything. They may seem to be quiet, compliant, or easy to please. In reality, they may be numb to the situation. Children may deny the loss completely. For example, they might say my mommy is coming to pick me up soon.

- **Implications.** Caregivers might misinterpret the child’s behavior, thinking this is an easy move. Later, behavioral signs are not recognized as part of the grieving process. Then the child is ignored or determined to have behavioral problems. Punishment may intensify the child’s distress. Children without attachment to caregivers may not react at all. This can indicate an inability to form relationships.
Slide notes

To learn about the Anger and Protest Stage of Grief, click on each tab below.

- **Description:** At some point, the impact of the loss cannot be denied. This usually results in anger or protest. A child’s anger may be directed at anyone or anything, including themselves, the lost person, God or fate, or anyone else. The anger may also have no direction. Often times, children express attitudes of guilt, blame, accusation, and protest.

- **Behavioral Expressions in Children.** During the Anger and Protest stage, children may exhibit physical symptoms of headaches and stomachaches or emotional episodes. They may have increased tantrums or extreme outbursts. Children sometimes withdraw, sulk, and pout, or refuse to participate in social activities. Children may be oppositional or overtly rebellious. They may compare their resource home to their old home, the resource home may never be good enough. Children may not talk, eat, or sleep.

- **Implications.** During the anger and protest stage, children can be difficult to live with and may be disruptive to the family. A resource parent can expect multiple struggles for control in the home. The potential exists for a child to be misdiagnosed as emotionally disturbed, severely behaviorally handicapped, or other emotional disorders.
To learn about the Bargaining Stage of Grief, click on each tab below.

- **Description:** A child goes through the bargaining stage as their final attempt to regain control and prevent loss. The child may resolve to change their behaviors and be better. A child might think they can determine reunification with their parents by doing something good, such as being helpful.

- **Behavioral Expressions in Children:** Children in this stage of grief will be eager to please their caregiver, and promise to do better. They may try to undo the behavior they think led to the removal. If the child was beaten for not eating his food, he may now always clean his plate. In an effort to ensure consistency, a child may even ritualize good behavior. For example, they may create a ritual of completing a certain task at the same time every day, seeking the same praise or reward each time. They will often try to negotiate agreements with their caregiver or caseworker. A child might appear to be more moralistic in their behaviors or beliefs than they have been in the past.

- **Implications:** While the bargaining stage is easier than the anger and protest stage, it is important to note that these behaviors do not represent a change in the child’s character, and this is actually an attempt by the child to control their environment.
To learn about the Depression Stage of Grief, click on each tab below.

- **Description**: During the depression stage, children may exhibit expressions of despair, futility, and listlessness. They may experience episodes of panic, withdrawal, or lack of interest in people. Often times these children cannot be comforted.

- **Behavioral Expressions in Children**: Children going through depression may display social and emotional withdrawal. They can be vulnerable, easily hurt, and anxious. Children may lack direction or energy to do anything, appearing to be distracted or lost. They will often have little to no goal-directed activities such as sports or clubs. Their behaviors might regress to thumb sucking, bed wetting, and baby talk. These children are often in emotional distress.

- **Implications**: There may be a considerable lapse of time between the original separation, and the onset of depressive behavior in the child. By being aware of this, the worker will be less likely to attribute depressive behavior at this time as being a result of a more recent cause, unrelated to the original separation.
To learn about the Resolution Stage of Grief, click on each tab below.

- **Description:** Most people cannot tolerate intense emotional and psychological pain for extended periods of time. If previous relationships and attachments have been positive, the person will usually direct their behavior toward strengthening other relationships. The person also begins to invest more emotional energy toward planning the future and less ruminating about the past. The final stage of grieving ends when the person returns to an active life in the present.

- **Behavioral Expressions in Children:** As a child begins to understand they will not be reunited with their biological parents, they begin to go through the resolution stage. The child will start to identify as part of their new family. They begin strengthening emotional attachments to their new caregivers. The child will exhibit decreased distress and increased pleasure. They will become more interested in goal directed activities, and their emotional reactions to stressful situations will diminish.

- **Implications:** Behaviors suggesting resolution are generally positive signs, if the case plan includes permanent separation of the child from their family. If permanent separation is not part of the case plan, these behaviors would indicate that our case management activities have been deficient. It is inappropriate for a child to resolve the loss of a family if the plan is reunification.
The Stages of Grief are NOT concrete:

- They will ‘mesh’ together
- A child may bounce between stages
- Stages do not always occur in the same order
- A child may never get to Resolution

Slide notes

It is important to note that the stages of grief are not concrete. They will mesh together. A child may bounce between many of the stages, and they do not always occur in order. A child may never get to resolution, even if the parental relationship is permanently separated and the child is adopted.
It is important for FCMs to understand the Stages of Grief in order to know the children we care for. Many times, the behaviors children are expressing are a direct result of their grief. Misdiagnosed behaviors can lead to inappropriate treatment, misdirected therapy, and inappropriate medications. While FCMs cannot diagnose, they can work with doctors, therapists, and DCS Clinical Consultants in their regions to ensure children's needs are being properly met.
Slide 16 - Stages of Grief Quick Review

**QUICK REVIEW:**

Before you finish, please complete this quick review of the Stages of Grief!

Slide notes

Before you finish, please complete this quick review of the Stages of Grief!
In which stage might a child act as if they are not feeling a loss?

- A) Depression
- B) Shock/Denial
- C) Anger/Protest
- D) Bargaining

Slide notes
In which stage might a child act as if they are not feeling a loss?
Slide 18 - Review: Multiple Choice #2

Which stage usually signifies the end of the process?

- A) Depression
- B) Shock/Denial
- C) Resolution
- D) Bargaining

Slide notes
Which stage usually signifies the end of the process?
Slide 19 - Review: Multiple Choice #3

Which stage tends to be MOST disruptive to the normal routine of the resource family?

- A) Anger/Protest
- B) Depression
- C) Bargaining
- D) Resolution

Slide notes
Which stage tends to be most disruptive to the normal routine of the resource family?
Children work through each stage of grief in order.

- A) True
- B) False
Every child in care should reach the Resolution Stage.

- A) True
- B) False
Children in the bargaining stage may appear to be very well behaved.

○ A) True 
○ B) False
Thank you for taking The Effects of Abuse and Neglect on Children and Families: Introduction to the Stages of Grief training! ELM will reflect your completion of this training within 24-48 hours.

Developed and presented by the Indiana Child Welfare Education and Training Partnership

Designed by: Crystal Offutt

Slide notes

Thank you for taking The Effects of Abuse and Neglect on Children and Families: Introduction to the Stages of Grief training! ELM will reflect your completion of this training within 24-48 hours. Developed and presented by the Indiana Child Welfare Education and Training Partnership.