



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What used to be "normal" that isn't right now? What emotions does that stir in you?
- What are some new rhythms/patterns you are experiencing in your life right now?
- What has been an anchor for you in seasons of change?
- How have you experienced the "absence of normal" in your life?
- How are you feeling hopeful for a "new normal" in your life?

FINDING A NEW NORMAL

RESOURCES & REFLECTIVE GUIDES

Navigating grief and finding a new normal is a transformative journey. Amidst the initial disorientation and shattered emotions, hope emerges in small moments.

In time, the new normal becomes less foreign and more familiar. The pain of grief of an illness or loss doesn't vanish completely, but it softens, allowing us to cherish the memories without being consumed by sorrow.

It's not a return to the past, but a reimagining of life...discovering new rhythms, new routines, new community, even new growth and strength you never thought you had.

As your strength grows, hope takes root, encouraging us through setbacks. The new normal becomes familiar, allowing us to cherish memories without being consumed by sorrow. It's a testament to resilience, where sorrow and hope intertwine, leading us to greater healing.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Begin in that particular corner and work your way clockwise around the triangle to bring it down to the center, trying each suggested step.

- At the defensive corner: If I didn't use this defense, what might I be feeling about my current situation?
- At the inhibitory corner: When you feel the inhibitory emotions, what helps calm your anxiety?
- At the core emotions: What does acceptance look like for the core emotions?
- When you have felt at an open-hearted state?

TRIANGLE OF CHANGE

When faced with grief and disruption in life, our emotions are triggered (this is normal and natural). But the way we respond can feel out of control and unnatural.

How can we find our way back to "normal" and feel a sense of calm? Think through how you respond at each corner of the triangle to work your way down to a more "open-hearted state".

Begin by looking at each corner and use the questions at the left. Which corner(s) do you find yourself in today? Emotions are NORMAL but we handle them in different ways- being defensive, inhibiting them, or not sitting with our core emotions.

DEFENSIVE EMOTIONS

Attempt to avoid the emotion (numbing out, addictions, etc)

TRY: Move defense aside to access underlying emotions.

Ask Yourself

- Check in with yourself multiple times a day. What corner(s) are you in?
- Then try to "spend time" in each corner, moving clockwise and heading down.

INHIBITORY EMOTIONS

3 Main Ones:
Anxiety
Guilt
Shame

TRY: Work to calm anxiety, quiet shame/guilt to name core emotions.

Ask Yourself

- What are the physical sensations I experience in each corner?
- What are things I can practically try in each corner?

CORE EMOTIONS

Fear, anger, grief, or even joy, excitement

TRY: Name core emotion, validate and accept it.



OPEN-HEARTED STATE OF THE AUTHENTIC SELF

Calm, curious, connected, compassionate, confident, courageous, clear.

TRY: Try to stay with this! What do you enjoy about this current state?



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

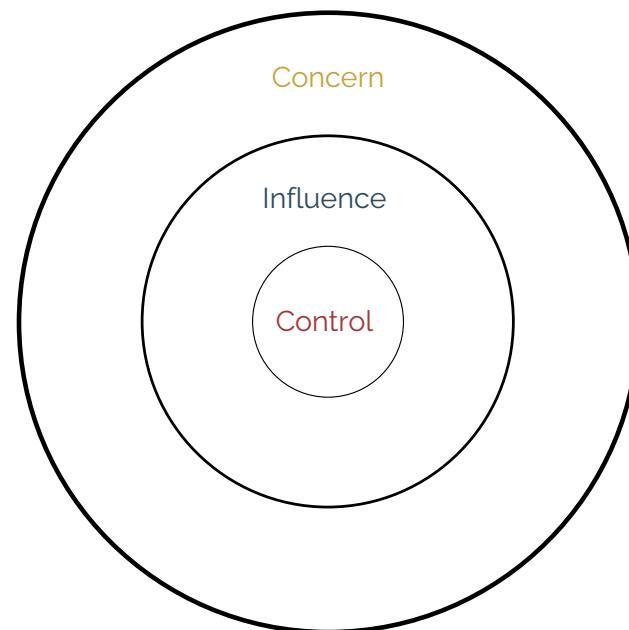
- What would happen if you only focused on one of the circles? What would be some possible outcomes?
- What freedom can you or have you experienced by focusing on your sphere of influence? Sphere of control?

CIRCLE OF CONTROL

What can you actually control and what can you not? Even your own emotions can feel out of control and can take you by surprise.

As you navigate uncertainty and seek to find a new normal, oftentimes the first step begins with slowly down to carefully assess what is in your control, what is in your influence, and what is your area of concern.

Use the below spheres to take an inventory of your own life and think through what is actually your piece to own and what can you surrender. By doing so, you might invite more feelings of normalcy, acceptance, and freedom into your life.



Sphere of Control

- Where do you spend your time/what do you own?

Sphere of Influence

- What are the things you influence (other relationships, etc.) but don't control?

Sphere of Concern

- What are you concerned about but have absolutely no control over?



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What can't you do? Or a certain family member do? How does this make you feel? Write or draw pictures on the cloud. For teens, simply use this as a conversation guide.
- What CAN we do when we feel that way? (Help give choices for younger children). Write or draw pictures on the sun.
- What are some things we can do together to focus on the "sunshine can"? Discuss as you glue the sun over the clouds.

FAMILY ACTIVITY- WE CAN'T BUT WE CAN

Part of embracing a new normal might first also include grieving what doesn't feel normal anymore. Validating that loss or change come first before then moving toward living in the present with hope and gratitude in the big or small things.

Gather the family together and cutout the clouds to process through the "can't" of life that can feel like storm clouds (like, "My mom can't walk" or "We can't have people over the way we used to.") Then moved toward what you CAN do which can feel like the sun peeking through the clouds ("We CAN sit and play with mom" or "We can go to another friend's house").

Choose to glue these completely over the clouds, somewhat over the clouds, or maybe just slightly peeking out. This represents the invitations to hold both feelings and emotions that come with the grief AND new opportunities all at once.

