

**WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for June 1, 2020**  
**Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.**

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, and Healthy Relationships we'll talk about coping with loss and disappointment.

Over the past week my irises and peonies have been blooming like crazy and all our mulching is done. The vegetable garden is planted and our second season strawberry plants have lots of baby green berries. Last night it was still light outside when I went to bed at my normal time. Though much of our lives have been altered, the natural world keeps going on right on schedule.

Many of us would have been attending graduation open houses this weekend. Or hanging out at the ballpark or headed out on vacation. This is not the way that many of us thought we'd be starting our summers. In most cases, young people have had lives with very little hardship and few disappointments. In many cases, we as parents have made sure they haven't been too uncomfortable. Though we'd never say we gave them everything they wanted, we've certainly given them more than they've needed during their young lives.

We have a great opportunity before us. We can help young people to cope well with the loss and disappointment they now face. Because we know the truth is that we are not in control of all that happens in life and that loss and disappointment will show up over and over again. There are plenty of ways for people to choose an unhealthy path to deal with these emotions. As parents, grandparents, and friends, we can choose to help them see healthy options.

The Fuller Youth Institute gives some guidance to help young people navigate their loss and disappointment. As a family, start by making two lists. Title one column "Loss" and another column "Gratitude". Each family member can express the things they feel they have lost in the past 12 weeks and the things that they are grateful for.

Reason #1. Naming loss helps us be honest about grief.

We don't have to pretend like everything is just fine. We can name what has been lost and mourn it together. We can be sad. We can acknowledge sources of anger and irritability.

Reason #2. Naming loss keeps us from minimizing or silver-lining things.

As parents, a knee-jerk reaction is often to minimize. It is unhelpful to make "your life isn't so bad" statements as a first response. We must also remove the words "at least" from our

vocabulary because it is a way to try to add a silver lining around a dark-cloud experience. At the beginning of processing, young people need someone else to acknowledge that their experience is sad. Try to practice saying, “Yes, that is so frustrating that you don’t get to go to that event. I’m sad about that too.”

Reason #3. Naming gratitude prevents us from drowning in sorrow.

We can be honest about what is hard without getting stuck. Finding things to be thankful for is a research-proven practice that can help all of us manage both daily struggles and bigger challenges. There is no need to try to cancel out all the sadness by manufacturing gratitude, but it is important to find something that is going right in our lives when all feels wrong.

Name your losses. Grieve over them but do not dwell on them. Name your gratitudes. Then celebrate them.

A next step can be to talk about control. Acknowledge that we can never control everything in our lives. However, we certainly can control our internal attitudes and external responses. A great follow up exercise is to write down the things as a family you can control and cannot control, so you can shift your focus away from what you do not have power over.

If you are on Facebook, be sure to check out the page “OSU Extension Coshocton County.” We hope that you will like and follow our page to receive updates and information about agriculture and natural resources, and healthy living topics like nutrition and finances and parenting.

Remember: Keep cooking. Keep cleaning. Keep learning. Keep living.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at [coshocton.osu.edu](http://coshocton.osu.edu). Make it a healthy day!