

Group Counseling - Grades K-8  
Content Area: Divorce / Changing Families  
Time Period: 6-8 weeks (longer if needed)

**Essential Questions:**

- What emotions do we feel as a result of our changing families?
- Why is it important to understand and address these emotions?
- What can we do to make adjusting to our changing families easier?
- Why is it important to talk about our changing families?
- How are some of our families similar?
- How are some of our families different?
- Why is it important to understand which stage of divorce we are going through?
- How can it be beneficial to know which stage of divorce we are working toward?

**Big Ideas:** Students can learn and develop a better understanding of their changing families and all the changes already experienced, as well as ones to expect going forward. Students will also develop healthy coping strategies through discussions and activities. Students can demonstrate understanding of these concepts by:

- Recognizing the ways in which their families have changed.
- Recognizing what emotions are often experienced and what triggers them.
- Recognizing calming down helps us think clearly.
- Recognizing that changes in family dynamics does not change the love they have for us.
- Identifying some positive aspects of the family changes.
- Recognizing that no two families are the same.

**SEL Competencies:**

- Self-Awareness: Recognize one's feelings and thoughts. Recognize the impact of :ones' feelings and thoughts on one's own behavior.
- Self-Management: Understand and practice strategies for managing one's own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors.
- Social Awareness: Recognize and identify the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of others.
- Relationship Skills: Utilize positive communication and social skills to interact effectively with others. Identify who, when, where, or how to seek help for oneself or others.

**\*\*Always hold the first 1-2 group sessions as ice breakers / getting to know you, and group rules review.**

#### Unit 1: Family Story

- Discuss what your family looks like and identify everyone in it.
- How did things look before the divorce?
- How are they different now?
- Compare and contrast each family, focus on the fact that every family (even divorced families) are very different from one another.
- Briefly introduce coping strategies to use when feeling upset about the divorce.

#### Unit 2: Identifying and Understanding Emotions

- Identify the different emotions felt as a result of divorce.
- Recognize what those emotions look like for us and how they are expressed.
- Discuss thoughts provoked by those emotions.
- Identify triggers to each specific emotion identified.

#### Unit 3: Stages of divorce

- Discuss the stages of divorce
- Have students identify which stage they are currently in and which stages they have already experienced.
- Identify which stage we are working towards next.

#### Unit 4: Traveling Between Homes:

- Students will identify pros and cons to living in two different homes.
- Students will begin to recognize items they may need to bring from home to home.
- Discuss how to stay organized and responsible for belongings while traveling from home to home.

#### Unit 5: Dealing with Step Families (only cover if applicable to most of the group members)

- Discuss Stepparents and stepsiblings
  - Keep an open mind and get to know them
- Discuss things you like/dislike about them
- Ways to improve the relationships
- Ways to cope with stressors that may come up.

#### Unit 6: Circle of Control:

- Go over the circle of control and discuss what we can and cannot control about the divorce.
- Emphasize why it's important to not focus on things outside of our control

#### Unit 7: Coping Strategies:

- Identify common things about the divorce that are upsetting to us.
- Identify and develop a list of coping skills students will agree to use when those situations arise.

Unit 8: Wrap Up:

- Wrap up the group and reflect on the progress students have made.
- Remind students of their coping skills and have them identify adults they can talk to as needed.
- Play a game or fun activity to end the group on a positive note.