

# Disenfranchised Grief

“Disenfranchised grief: Someone has experienced a loss...but the survivors [or person(s)] are not afforded the ‘right to grieve’...So, although the person experienced grief, that grief is not openly acknowledged, socially validated, or publicly observed.” (1)

“Every society has norms that frame grieving...when loss occurs, the grieving rules include not only how one is to behave but also how one is to feel and think.” (1)

## Disenfranchised Grief: The Loss of an Adolescent Romantic Relationship (2)

“Loss of a romantic relationship constitutes a major life change...Adolescence is a period of transition and stress. Developmentally it is a period of emotional separation from childhood and family of origin when attachment to peers becomes a priority... identity vs. role confusion and intimacy vs. isolation. (2)

**Romance: an attachment process: 1) Secure attachment** is a product of consistent, satisfying care and consequently expects to establish a fulfilling romantic relationship. **2) Avoidant attachment** is a product of rejecting parenting and is pessimistic about finding a satisfying romantic relationship. **3) Anxious/Ambivalent attachment** is a product of inconsistent parenting and believes that it is rare to find “true love.” (2)

- 1 - Kenneth J. Doka, *Introduction to Disenfranchised Grief*, (Research Press Publishers, Champaign, Illinois, 2002)
- 2 - Margaret Kaczmarek and Barbara Backlund, *Disenfranchised Grief: The loss of an adolescent romantic relationship*, (Article: Adolescence v26 n102 p253-59 Sum, 1991.)

Storytelling in a small group or personal reflection. One by one, each person shares their answer to the first prompt below. Then go to the next prompt and so forth. A person can pass.

1. **Share how you, or someone you know, have experienced “Disenfranchised Grief.”** (After a loss you “are not afforded the right to grieve.)
2. **Tell a story about the loss and grief you experienced when a romantic (or close) relationship ended. What did you learn about “true love?”**
3. **Share any insights or emotions you had as you shared about your (or others) disenfranchised grief.**