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Sadness is an adaptive response to pain and loss. Sadness can help you move on from situations in which you have experienced some sort of pain or loss. Sadness can be adaptive if it is part of a natural grieving process that resolves over time. After a loss, you will feel sad and then the grief should subside over time.

Sadness can be maladaptive if you feel too much sadness in proportion to a real or perceived loss. Maladaptive sadness may be part of depression which may mask or mute all feelings.

Grief is a necessary process after experiencing the loss of a loved one. However, intense grief for a long period of time may indicate persistent complex bereavement that may interfere with normal functioning.

Mild Sadness	Moderate Sadness	Intense Sadness
Down	Sad	Grief
Unhappy	Disappointed	Hopeless
Blue	Hurt	Dejected
Mopey	Lonely	Despair

In response to pain or loss, either ignoring sadness or magnifying sad feelings may be problematic. Dismissing sadness or ignoring a significant loss may lead to unresolved feelings or may result in emotions leaking out in indirect ways. Dwelling on intense feelings of despair may represent a maladaptive level of sadness. An adaptive level of sadness will involve acknowledging a loss and feeling a proportional amount of sadness.

[illegible]

"It was no big deal."

"I'm disappointed that I didn't get what I had hoped for"

"I'll never be happy again."

Ignore Loss

Thoughtful / Reflective

Lose Hope

Coping with sadness involves acknowledging the importance of a loss, finding meaningful ways of expressing sadness, and seeking social support. If you are able to express your grief or sadness in healthy ways in a supportive environment, your emotions may resolve gradually over time.