



Light
in the
path

Didactic Unit

Self-reflection: How do I know if I am going through migration grief? When do I know that I have already passed the migration grief?



The didactic units were created by:
Janela Das Brincadeiras (Porgugal)

Go and Glow (Spain)

Association of Young Psychologists
in Bulgaria "4th April"
(Bulgaria)



This didactic unit is part of the project

LIGHT IN THE PATH

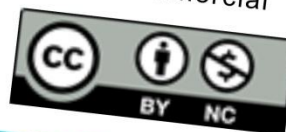
2024-1-PT02-KA220-YOU-000255555



**Co-funded by
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Self-reflection: How do I know if I am going through migration grief? When do I know that I have already passed the migration grief?

Migration grief is often an invisible companion on the path. As the opposite of physical wounds, it does not leave visible marks or draw immediate concern. Many people are unaware that the confusion, sadness, etc., they feel after moving is actually part of a grieving process. Some of them might blame themselves for not adapting faster and/or feel ashamed for not being more excited about their new life.

As there is few information about it, migration grief goes unrecognized and underestimated, thinking that the only mourning that exists is linked to death.

Recognizing migration grief can be transformative. Once named, it can be understood and navigated with more compassion and clarity. Its acknowledgement is an important step toward healing.

Activity: My personal butterfly

Duration: 40 minutes

Objectives:

- To acknowledge specific aspects of your life linked to migration grief.
- To conduct self-reflections of your current situation.

Materials:

- Sheet of paper
- Coloring materials. The ones that you prefer the most, such as colored pencils, watercolors, etc.





Description of the activity:

Step 1: Our butterfly

On the sheet of paper, draw a butterfly.



Step 2: Self-Reflection

Answer the questions below. If your answer is yes, color a part of the butterfly in blue to represent recognition of your feeling or situation. If your answer is no, color it in yellow to reflect that this is not currently part of your path (maybe it was in the past, but not anymore).

- Do I often miss my country of origin?
- Do I have nightmares or have sleep problems?
- Do I have changes in appetite?
- Am I constantly involved in numbing behaviors?
- Do I feel like I have lost a part of my identity or sense of belonging?
- Are there moments when I feel “stuck” between two cultures?
- Do I often compare life here to life back home?





- Do I feel disconnected from people around me?
- Do I prefer to do things alone?
- Do I have fatigue, muscle tension, aches, pain, etc.?
- Am I normally detached from the reality of living here?
- Do I have difficulties in concentrating?
- Do I feel I am passing by any of the stages of grief, except the last one? (Information in Didactic Unit “The Phases of Migration grief”)?
- Do I constantly feel myself longing for my past life?
- Do I focus more on the negative things, having difficulties to see the positive things that I have here?
- Do I constantly have feelings such as anxiety, sadness, fear, anger, etc.?
- Do I constantly have mood swings?
- Do I feel that my life is empty?
- Am I constantly looking on what is happening in the previous country, without focusing on what is happening here?
- Is it hard for me to make effective decisions?

Step 3: Review your self-evaluation

Take a moment to observe your colored butterfly. If you notice that it is more blue than yellow, it might be a sign that you are currently experiencing migration grief, as many of your answers reflect ongoing challenges on your path. This is a natural and valid part of the adaptation process.

On the other hand, if your butterfly is mostly yellow, it suggests that you may have moved through the most difficult parts of your grief and are beginning to feel more integrated in the new country.





Reflection of the activity:

On the following link, you will find the video “Why It Is So Hard to Live in the Present” developed by The School of Life:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MSE6ZlaEFHM>

Are you having problems in focusing on the positive things?

Migration grief often lives in the tension between *what was* and *what could be*, leaving little room for *what is*. As the video suggests, much of our suffering stems not from the actual moment we are in, but from our anxious mind jumping between memory and anticipation.

Learning to live the present, even briefly, is a powerful step in healing migration grief. It allows us to appreciate the now without demanding it be perfect, to embrace small joys, see the positive things in the new country, etc. The present, while messy and imperfect, is where true growth and renewal begin.





References:

- Pingol, E. (2024). "Inventory of Complicated Grief". CarePatron [online] Available at: <https://www.carepatron.com/templates/inventory-of-complicated-grief>
- Queensland Government (2024) "Grief counselling and support" [online] Available at: <https://www.qld.gov.au/health/support/loss/coping#:~:text=Signs%20of%20grief&text=A%20grieving%20person%20may%20experience,or%20a%20reluctance%20to%20cry>
- Image:
 - Butterfly black and white: Image from Canva.com edited by ChatGPT
 - Butterfly yellow and blue: Canva.com
- Layout Design:
 - Canva.com

