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### An Overlooked Piece of First-Gen College Success: Overcoming Past Traumatic Experiences

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An Overlooked Piece of First-Gen College Success –  
Overcoming Past Traumatic Experiences

Angelle E. Richardson, Ph.D., LPC

Dyron J. Corley, Ed.D.

**First Generation College Student**

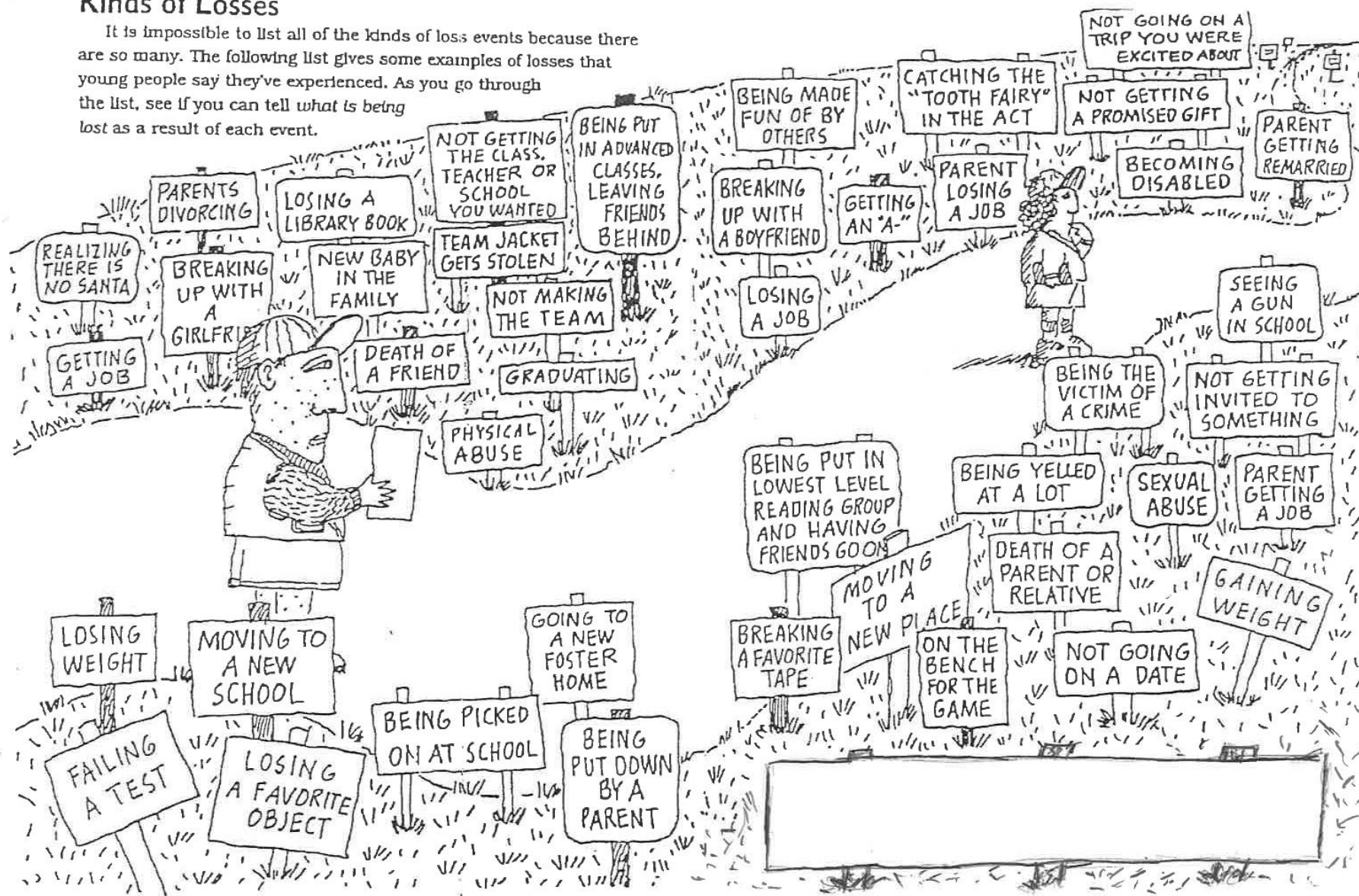
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# The Need for this Conversation . . .

- Between 66-85 percent of young people report experiencing lifetime traumatic event exposure before reaching college (Read, Ouimette, White, Colder, & Farrow, 2011; Smyth, Hockemeyer, Heron, Wonderlich, & Pennebaker, 2008)
- 60 percent of adults have reported experiencing abuse or other difficult family circumstances during their children (National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention, 2012)
- Risk factors for trauma exposure: ethnic minority status and low SES (Read et al., 2011).

## Kinds of Losses

It is impossible to list all of the kinds of loss events because there are so many. The following list gives some examples of losses that young people say they've experienced. As you go through the list, see if you can tell what is being lost as a result of each event.



You can probably think of a many more examples because there are so many ways to experience a loss. It's important to remember that all changes, even the good ones, begin with an ending. When good things happen, the way life used to be is gone... and that is about loss.

Earl Hipp. "Help for The Heart Times"

# What Is Trauma?

Trauma is



anything that  
overwhelms the brain's  
ability to cope.

**S.E.L.F.**

**Conceptual  
Framework of the  
Sanctuary Model**

**Safety**

**Emotions**

**Loss**

**Future**



SAFETY



# Types of Safety



Physical

Psychological

Social

Moral

# Ways to Create Safety

**Provide Choices**

**Remain Calm**

**Establish a Safe Environment**

**Identify a Support System**

**Maintain a Routine**

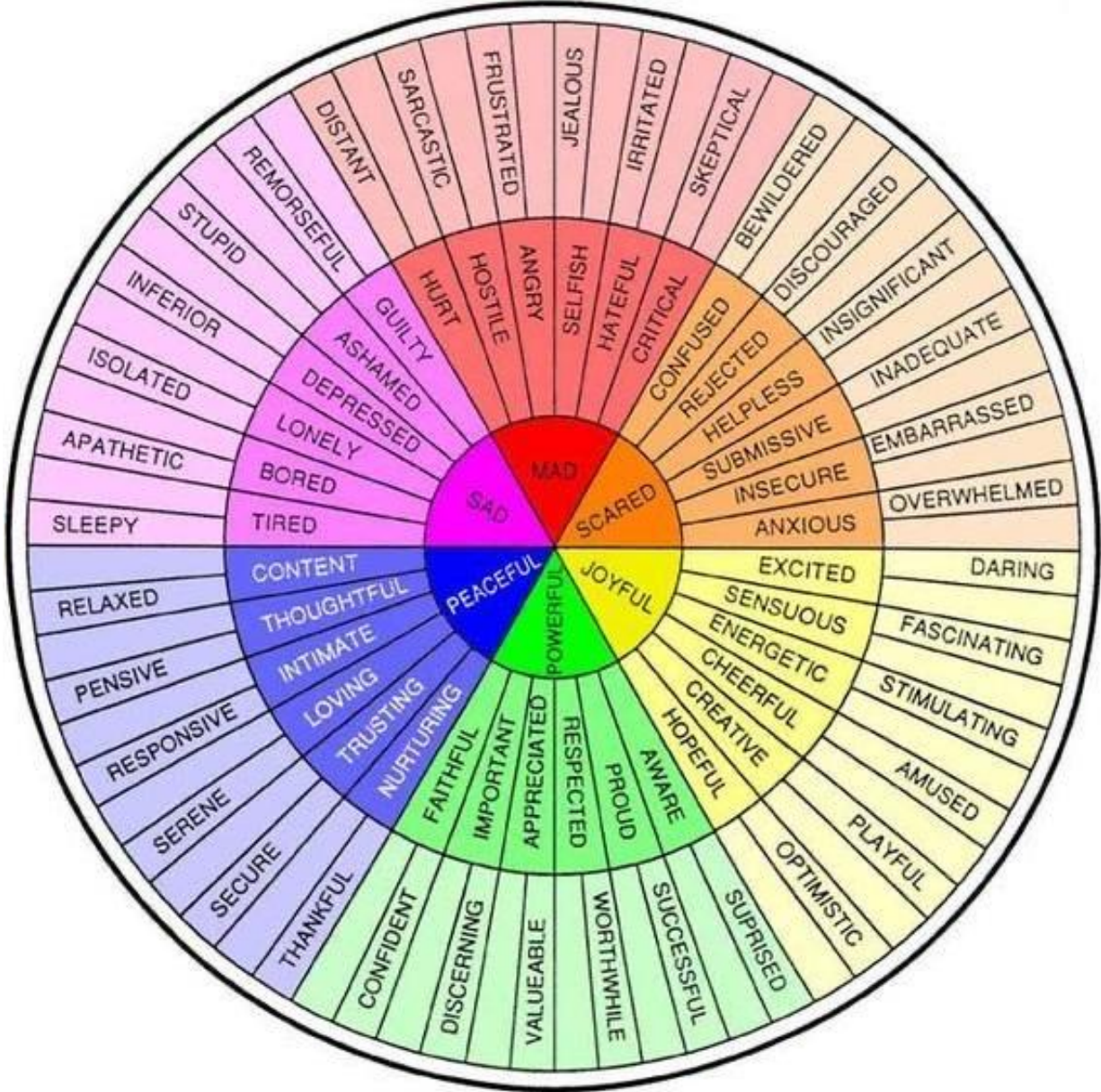
The image features a dark grey background with three overlapping circles in shades of blue. A horizontal white band is positioned across the middle of the circles. The word "EMOTIONS" is centered within this white band in a dark blue, serif font.

# EMOTIONS

**FEELINGS ARE NOT THE ENEMY!**

Some People May  
Only Know:

MAD  
SAD  
HAPPY  
SCARED



# We Can Help By...

- Understanding when people don't have the words for their feelings
- Helping people to name their feelings
- Finding other ways to help people express their feelings other than words



The image features a dark gray background with three overlapping circles in shades of blue. A horizontal white band runs across the center of the image, containing the word "LOSS" in a dark blue, serif font.

LOSS

## What is Loss?



Loss is covers more than death.

Loss is also a transition.



# Types of Losses

Primary Loss

Secondary Loss

Ambiguous Loss

Intangible Loss

**We can help  
by...**

**Preparing for transitions**

**Creating healthy rituals for loss**

**Recognizing positive goodbyes**



FUTURE

# One Step at a Time

People with a history of loss and/or trauma have difficulty envisioning the future because the past has such a hold on them.

# Imagining the Future

*As people can envision positive experiences for their future, their body language and facial expressions change.*



# We can help by...

- Allowing time for healthy play
- Engaging in play ourselves
- Help people to explore their future
- Encourage people to dream
- Allow people to change their minds
- Encourage people to engage in new experiences to expand their worldview



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**THANK  
YOU!**

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