

# Breaking Up

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A discussion guide for validating grief without letting it collapse into identity

FOR STUDENTS, COUNSELORS, AND TRUSTED ADULTS

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## PURPOSE

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The end of a relationship can be one of the most destabilizing experiences of adolescence. This guide helps young people grieve honestly while maintaining a stable sense of who they are beyond the relationship.

## OPENING PROMPT

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*“What’s the hardest part of this, right now, today?”*

## KEY THEMES

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**Loss of routine and identity.** Relationships become woven into daily life. When they end, students lose not just a person but a rhythm. Acknowledge this concretely.

**Heartbreak vs. depression.** Grief is healthy and necessary. Help students and the adults in their lives recognize when sadness has shifted into something that warrants more support.

**Healthy processing vs. numbing out.** Distraction has its place, but avoidance prolongs pain. Help students stay connected to their feelings without becoming overwhelmed by them.

## CLOSING PROMPT

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*“What do you still know to be true about yourself?”*