



Views from VanDeWalle

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Youth Crop Scouting Competition - Connecting Youth with Crops

Looking for a fun club project? Want to unite your club members? Running out of ideas for club meetings? If you answered, “yes” to any of these questions, help is on the way! Nebraska Extension is pleased to present the 5th annual Crop Scouting Competition for Nebraska youth. Youth interested in crops have the opportunity to learn about crop growth & development and basic crop scouting principles.

Don't know a lot about crops? Ask a local agronomist to assist by providing a short lesson on crop production. You can have the agronomist meet with youth a little during each meeting or outside of the meeting. This is one way to engage those youth interested in crops.

This contest will be held at the ENREC near Mead, Nebraska on July 28, 2020, pending directive health measures at that time. If a live competition is unable to occur, a virtual option will be conducted. Teams of middle school thru high school students (those completing 5-12th grades) from across Nebraska are invited to participate. This year, to comply with directive health measures, the event is limited to the first five teams who sign-up!

Clubs or other organizations may enter a team composed of three to five participants. An adult team leader must accompany each team of students. Team leaders could be FFA advisors, crop consultants, extension staff, coop employees, etc.

Top-scoring teams win prizes: \$500 for first, \$250 for second, \$100 for third place. Unfortunately, there will not be a regional competition this year.

Teams will be expected to know the basics of scouting corn and soybean fields. This includes crop staging; looking for patterns of crop injury; disease, insect and weed seedling identification; etc. Other topics many include but are not limited to, pesticide safety, nutrient disorders, and herbicide injury.

More information about the crop scouting competition and instructions on how to register a team are available online at cropwatch.unl.edu/youth. Register at: <https://go.unl.edu/cropscoutingreg>.

Teams must be registered by July 15. This program is sponsored by Nebraska Independent Crop Consultant Association and Nebraska Extension.

4-H Youth Modified Fair Reminder

While the 4-H/FFA youth components of the fair will not look the same, due to the help of many amazing Nebraska Extension staff, local volunteers, 4-H parents, etc., it is looking like locally, we will be able to celebrate our youth face-to-face. That being said, please help us by being patient as some things change daily or even hourly. I'm very humbled to be able to say both Clay & Fillmore County 4-H programs will be able to provide youth the opportunity to showcase their hard work in a face-to-face setting.

Shows are for only *family* members/guardians of that exhibitor in attendance at the shows. All livestock shows will be available for online viewing to the best of our abilities. Please be



respectful of our youth and realize this face-to-face option will only happen with community support and being respectful of our youth and following of public health department guidelines.

Could this be Grief? Loss, Disappointment, and Cancellations

Written by Dr. Holly Hatton-Bowers and Dr. Amy Napoli

Many of us have experienced major changes in our daily routines and activities. We have experienced loss of social connections, normalcy of routine, and a sense that life is forever changed. For youth, they have experienced these changes and losses too. Abrupt school closures, not being able to participate in ceremonies and cancellations of summer camp or family vacations can bring feelings of sadness, disappointment, and frustration.

It's important to know that youth may be experiencing ***grief***. According to the National Institute of Health, grief is defined as a reaction to a major loss of someone or something. It is common for young people to feel ***grief*** during this time of great uncertainty. For some, this will be their first major encounter with grief; therefore, it can be helpful to understand the experience of grief: the emotions, behaviors, and/or reactions. Grief is universal and also personal.

Grief is normal and can be shown in different ways. Some youth may withdraw and become quiet, some will cry more easily, some will be more argumentative and irritable, push people away or become clingier. Sometimes feelings of grief will lead to physical symptoms, such as headaches or stomach aches. Grief can be overwhelming, confusing, and particularly challenging during a pandemic. Furthermore, grief is cyclical in nature. Unfortunately, it is not something you experience once and then it is over.

What can caring adults do to help young people experiencing grief? Support them by helping them identify their experience as grief. Learning about grief can help youth understand their experience, name their experience, and give them some ideas to be in control of their feelings. It is important to remember that youth are resilient. Research finds that in difficult times and changes, having a caring and supportive adult can help young people.

Here are some ways adults can support youth:

- **Be available, present, and patient to talk about grief.** Youth may not be ready to talk about their grief, loss, and disappointments right away. Be available and patient when they are ready to talk. It may take time to go through the process of grief.
- **If youth are ready to talk, simply listen.** Empathize with them and actively listen through eye contact, limit interrupting, and demonstrate interests through verbal and nonverbal communication. A head nod, gentle pat on the shoulder, or saying "I appreciate you sharing this with me or I am here to listen to you, is there anything else?" are ways to show active listening.
- **Help youth understand that we all have times when we experience grief.** You can say, "I understand this is difficult. You seem disappointed. It is really hard to miss out on this. Do you want to talk about it?" When you see youth are upset, it is best to first acknowledge these feelings and offer some understanding. Listen and accept their thoughts and feelings unconditionally and refrain from judgement.



- **Try not to go into a "I need to fix this" mindset.** Seeing youth experience strong feelings, like disappointment and grief, can be difficult. Avoid minimizing or reassuring them that “it will be ok” or “it is fine.” These types of statements can feel dismissive. Create a safe space for youth where they can be heard.
- **Acknowledge that everyone responds to grief in different ways.** Some youth may be angry, some will be stubborn, sad, or silent. These are all common ways of responding. Let youth express these strong feelings in safe ways.
- **Be a good role model.** Youth observe how adults handle disappointment, frustration, sadness, and anger. When you feel upset, model mindful breathing or share your feelings with others, this shows youth it is safe and okay to feel their feelings.
- **Help youth reflect to find meaning in these experiences.** It may be helpful to support them in helping others and finding gratitude. When they are ready, ask them what they are learning through this experience.
- **Find moments to laugh and express joy.** Help youth understand that it is common to experience different feelings and emotions at the same time.

These resources can provide additional support and help:

- Visit <https://griefsjourney.org> for workshops and support groups to help youth.
- The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-8255) provides free and confidential support 24/7.
- Crisis Text Line (text 741741) is free from anywhere in the U.S. and provides support for those in crisis 24/7.

These are difficult and painful times. Youth experiencing grief need a caring, available adult who is there to help them gain skills to be more resilient. Learning healthy ways to cope with these difficulties and strong feelings are important lifelong skills.

More information and resources about youth social-emotional development in difficult times can be found at <http://disaster.unl.edu/families> or by contacting your local county Nebraska Extension office.