

# Grief and Loss

understanding what your child is experiencing when their parent goes into custody

**When a child's parent is incarcerated, they may experience a lot of emotions. This is normal.**

Every child is different. Different personalities, ways of coping, and ways of expressing feelings like:

- Loss when a parent first goes into custody
- Shock from all the changes
- Sadness after visiting
- Fearful of authority/more family being arrested
- Anger that they need to change schools or move
- Distressed by events they may have witnessed
- Embarrassment and shame
- The effects of stigma
- Fear others expect them to end up in custody too
- Isolation from other children
- Guilt if they blame themselves
- Guilt if they are not allowed to tell anyone
- Abandoned
- Powerless to 'fix things'
- Confused about what will happen next
- Grief as they are suffering the loss of an important person in their life

**All children need love and support to help them. With support, they will be okay.**

