

Grief & Loss

What Is Grief?

Grief is the normal emotion that comes from losing someone or something important to you. Grief is a typical reaction to death or a loss such as divorce, a move away from family and friends, or an illness.

What Can I Do?

Grief is a natural process that takes time. Taking care of yourself during this time can help you to cope and recover. Here are some tips that may be helpful:

- **Honor your feelings.** Remember that grief is a normal emotion and that you can (and will) heal over time.
- **Talk about it.** It's good to reach out to other people who care about you and allow them to help. Your friends, other students, and teachers may be experiencing the same emotions you are. Providing support to one another can help everyone get through the grieving process.
- **Be with others.** Some people find it helpful to talk about their feelings. Sometimes a person just doesn't feel like talking, and that's OK. Even if you don't want to talk, just hanging out with family and friends can give a sense of comfort and reassurance and help people not to feel so alone in the first days and weeks of their grief.
- **Express yourself.** Again, even if you don't feel like talking, find ways to express your thoughts and feelings. Try writing in a journal, or creating a song, poem, drawing or painting about the memories you have and how you're feeling since the loss. You can do this privately or share it with others.
- **Take care of yourself.** Engaging in healthy behaviors can improve your ability to cope with stress. Eat healthy meals, get plenty of sleep, and get regular exercise or physical activity.
- **Join a support group.** If you think you may be interested in attending a support group, ask an adult or school counselor about how to become involved. Just remember that you don't have to be alone with your feelings or your pain.
- **Help others or do something productive.** Locate resources in your community on ways that you can help people in need. Helping someone else often has the benefit of making you feel better, too.
- **Participate in rituals.** Memorial services, funerals, and other traditions help people get through the first few days and honor the person who died. You can create a **memorial or tribute such as planting a tree or garden.**
- **Remember that grief is a long process.** Give yourself time to experience your feelings and to recover. It often helps to speak with others who have shared your experience so you do not feel so different or alone.

Where Can I Find More Support?

There are many resources for support. Below are several local, online, and phone support resources. Your school counselor can provide additional support and referrals as well.

If you continue to feel overwhelmed, talk with a licensed mental health professional who can help you learn how to cope with your grief. Experienced counselors can offer support and structure to help individuals and groups come to terms with a loss and make appropriate plans for memorials and gestures of condolences to family members.

SUPPORT & RESOURCES

GriefNet <http://www.griefnet.org> A Web site that provides information and resources related to death, dying, bereavement, and major emotional and physical losses.

Kids Aid <http://kidsaid.com/> is a safe place for kids to help each other deal with grief and loss. It's a place to deal with feelings in our e-mail support group, to share and view artwork and stories, and for parents and kids to ask questions and

24 hour Phone Support

- **Youth Line** 1-877-YOURLINE 1-877-968-8454 website: <http://www.youthline.us>
- **Lifeline** 1-800-273-TALK 1-800-273-8255 website: <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

References

Teens – KidsHealth www.kidshealth.org/teen

American Psychological Association Help Center <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter>

SAMSHA www.samhsa.gov/