



Children's Natural Grief Responses

These are all **NATURAL** and **NORMAL** grief responses. Talking and crying are important parts of the healing process. *If these symptoms persist, or increase in frequency, severity or duration, a physician or counselor should be consulted.* If you are a friend or family member of a child who is grieving... listen when they need to talk... offer support when they need to cry.

Typical Reactions to the Death:

- Confusion about the circumstances leading to the death
- Trouble falling asleep, staying asleep, or sleeping too much
- Change in eating habits (eating more, eating less, or eating more junk foods)
- Crying often or unwilling to cry in front of others
- Decreased interest in (or withdrawing from) friends, family, sports, normal activities
- Difficulty concentrating, or forgetting things
- Health problems such as stomachaches, headaches; frequent colds
- Poor judgment or self-control: Impulsivity or self-destructive behaviors
- Problem with parents, teachers, or other authority figures
- Dreams about the person who died, or an increase in nightmares
- Intrusive thoughts, remembering images about the death or memories of the person
- Changes in academic performance (grades drastically dropping or improving)
- Desire to be reunited with the deceased or suicidal thoughts

Children Suggest these Ways to Cope with Grief Feelings:

- Talk with someone you trust
- Exercise, play sports or dance
- Listen to favorite music or music that reminds you of the person who died
- Find a way to have some fun, see a funny movie, TV show or videogame
- Make a list of your strengths, things you like about yourself
- Practice deep breathing: Count to 10 when you feel stressed, angry and/or overwhelmed
- Take a walk at the beach or somewhere in nature
- Wash your face with cool water
- Scream into a pillow, or into a backpack, or punch a pillow or stuffed toy
- Paint or draw a picture
- Journal, write a poem or letter to the person who died
- Call **OUR HOUSE** for grief support