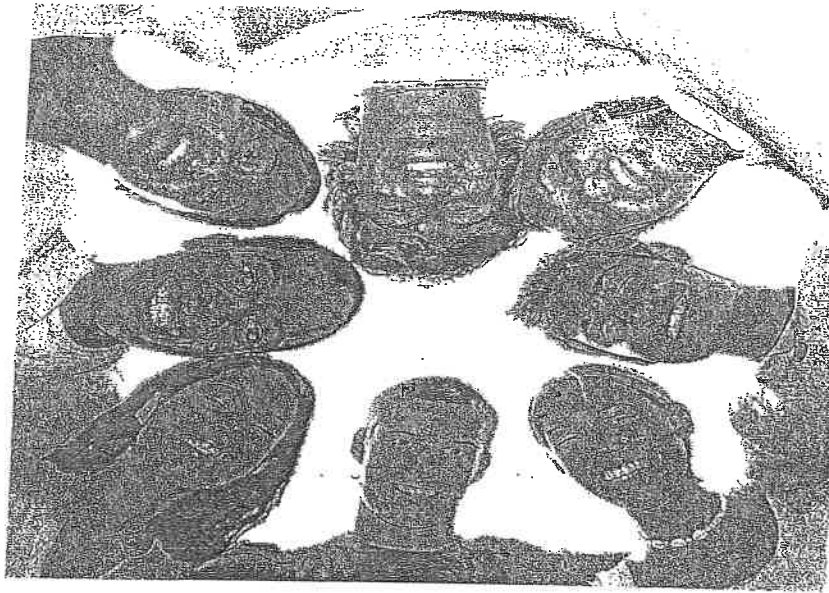


The 411 Teen Grief Guide



What Teens Need to
Know about
Grief & Loss



Teen Grief: The 411

By Mary K. Jones, CT. Director of Family Support Services
Hospice & Palliative Care of St. Lawrence Valley

Coping with the death of a loved one or close friend is never easy. It is especially difficult when the death is the first time someone you cared about has died. This handout answers some of the questions you may have about death and grief.

What does dead mean?

When someone dies the body stops working. This person can no longer see, feel, think, talk, move, and sleep. Despite what the horror movies portray, once you are dead, you're dead.

What is a funeral?

The funeral ritual has been around for centuries. Family and friends gather together to say good-bye and celebrate the life of the person who died. The funeral is the first of many steps in learning to live without this person in your life.

What is mourning?

Mourning is the process of learning to live without the person who died.

What is grief?

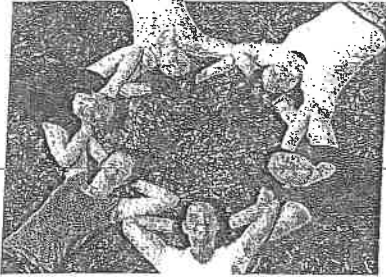
Grief is the feelings and emotions of coping with the death of a loved one.

How long does grief last?

There is no finish line for grief; nor is there a timetable to follow. The physical pain of loss subsides in time. *Remember: You don't get over the death; you learn to live with it.*

Why do I feel different?

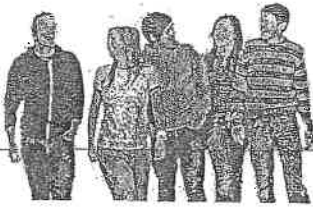
The death of a loved one changes who we are; it involves many different feelings and grief makes people feel different. Common feelings include: Anger, Guilt, Fear, Sadness, Shock, Mad, Alone, Overwhelmed, Loneliness, Abandonment and Anxiety to name a few.



Teen Grief: Ten Ideas for Coping with Loss

By Mary K. Jones, CT, Director of Family Support Services
Hospice & Palliative Care of St. Lawrence Valley

1. **Learn more about grief.** Grief is a normal response to loss. Grief is the feelings of loss. It's normal to feel sad, mad, lonely, scared, overwhelmed or not to feel much of anything.
2. **Read about loss.** Grief is not something to get over. You learn to live with loss each day.
3. **Talk about your loss.** Share your thoughts and feelings with friends and family.
4. **Be creative in dealing with loss.** Some teens have found keeping a journal of thoughts or poems helpful. Others have used art to express their feelings and others have created or listened to music to deal with loss.
5. **Do something.** Donate a book in your loved one's name. Plant flowers or trees. Do something for a neighbor. Many people find that remembering a loved one in a special way helps and so does doing something nice for someone else.
6. **Take care of yourself.** Eat right, drink lots of water and get plenty of sleep. Because grief is draining, take a walk, play basketball or take a yoga class.
7. **Grief is stressful.** Relieve your stress by watching a funny movie or T.V. show, learn to meditate, listen to music, and relax with friends.
8. **Cry.** Crying releases the stress and feelings that come with loss.
9. **Be aware of anger.** It's normal to feel angry that someone you cared about has died. The real issue is what you do with the anger. Find ways to let go. Play football, swim, take a walk, and lift weights. **It's never okay to physically hurt someone because you are angry.**
10. **There is no grief calendar.** In time you can remember without the intense pain of grief. Take it one moment at a time.



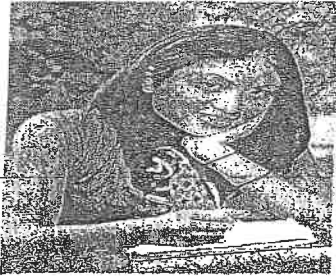
Teen Grief: **Creating a Grief Support Network**

From the website www.healingplaceinfo.org

Grief takes energy and effort. It can wear you out. That is why anyone going through loss due to the death of a loved one needs support, practical help and encouragement.

Here are some things that may help you along your grief journey:

- eat healthy foods and snacks
- get enough rest and take naps...remember grief is hard work!
- don't keep your feelings inside, find someone you trust to share them with
- get some form of physical exercise daily
- laugh often
- keep a diary
- talk to a trusted adult
- spend time with friends and people who care about you
- write a letter to God, say everything about the loss that is on your mind
- visit the cemetery if it makes you feel better
- start and keep a "Book of Memories"
- listen to music
- remember that grief takes time, the questions and concerns you have now may take some time to get answered
- do a good deed that would make your loved one proud of you
- let yourself off the hook; it's common to feel responsible for a loss, if you feel guilty, talk to a counselor about it
- join a support group to be with other teens who have experienced a loss



Teen Grief: HOW TO START A GRIEF JOURNAL

Writing about your thoughts and emotions about your loss on to paper is a helpful coping tool. Provided below are some tips for keeping a grief journal and ideas to write about.

TIPS FOR KEEPING A GRIEF JOURNAL:

- ☐ It is not a diary.
- ☐ Don't worry about grammar and spelling
- ☐ Write in the journal when you feel like it.
- ☐ You don't have to share this with anyone if you don't want to!

IDEAS TO WRITE ABOUT IN A GRIEF JOURNAL

- ☉ When I think of you, I remember
- ☉ Memories of you make me feel
- ☉ What I wish I told you before you died was...
- ☉ What I always wanted to hear you say was...
- ☉ The biggest change for me because of your death has been..
- ☉ What I have learned about myself since you died...
- ☉ The hardest things have been...
- ☉ What worries me most since you died is ...
- ☉ What I have learned about you since your death...

Suggested Internet Resources

<http://www.fireinmyheart.com/>

"This site is designed to let you share your stories, illustrations, help items and other information that you share in the journal "Fire In My Heart, Ice In My Veins" in a online anonymous environment. Your stories and illustrations can help and that is why we would like you to share them."

<http://www.griefnet.org>

An internet community that provides over thirty e-mail support groups. *Griefnet* has moderated chat rooms for kids in grief and parents. The site contains lists of books, library information, memorials, newsletters, and suicide prevention.

<http://www.kidsaid.com>

Kids and young teens can read about others' experiences with grief as well as post their own artwork and stories and join support groups.

<http://hellogrief.org>

This website offers information, expertise and guidance for kids and families in grief and the friends, relatives, communities, coworkers, counselors and others who care and want to help. The site includes a wide range of articles on grief, an on-line social networking community, a bulletin board, and a bereavement reference section.