

to listen to each child, meet them where they are, and appreciate their unique grief process.

- ✓ **Foster connections** - Allowing children to interact with others going through a similar experience is critical. Connecting with other children helps them feel less alone. In addition to child-to-child relationships, it's important for a child to have adults who foster a safe environment that's consistent and teaches resilience and accountability. Above all, children should feel safe to express their grief as needed.

KEEP IN MIND

Parenting or caring for a grieving child may be challenging, but you're not alone. There are a multitude of community services and internet resources available to offer grief support for your child.

What steps will you take today to help your grieving child find the healing he or she needs?



Young People and Grief
Mental Health

Young People and Grief

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WELL-BEING BEGINS HERE

Children are just as
VULNERABLE
to experiencing grief
as adults.

*Imagine possessing the skills needed to guide your
grieving child with openness and confidence.*

Regardless of age, grief is difficult.

Explaining to a child the realities
of death can feel exceptionally
challenging. You might not know
what to say or how much to share.

How do you know the best way to
help the grieving child?

THE GRIEF PROCESS

While we never simply “get over” the death of
a loved one, we do learn to live within this new
reality of life after loss. Each child’s grief response
is different based on their age and personality.
Regardless of the child’s closeness to the
deceased, the grief reaction is unique and normal
for each child. Patience is key as children may
react with changes in temperament or behavior.

The process for a grieving child may occur over
the span of many years. When losing a significant
family member at a young age, a child may
continue to revisit the grief at different stages.
Developmental milestones, such as prom or
graduation, may trigger another cycle of grief.
Others may find a positive coping expression
despite the loss, prompting them toward personal
growth and compassion. However, even if some
children use the experience to better themselves,
it does not negate or diminish their loss.

SIGNS OF GRIEF

- Changes in sleep and appetite
- Acting younger than their age
- Speaking frequently about wanting to be with the deceased
- Losing interest in once-enjoyed activities
- Lacking desire to play or hang out with friends
- Changes in academic performance or behavior

ACTION STEPS

If you know or care for a young person who is
struggling with grief, consider the following:

- ✓ **Be honest** – Sharing the truth about how
someone died can be difficult. However,
honesty builds trust and understanding,
providing space for children to ask questions.
By minimizing and avoiding the truth, we
risk leaving children to process through
complicated information alone rather than
within the safety of loving adults in their
lives.
- ✓ **Allow for differences** – Children will express
themselves in unique ways. Some will need to
talk about the deceased to verbally process
their feelings. Others might not discuss it
at all. Some children might express their
grief through creative means, such as art,
play, music, or writing. What’s important is