



Does Your Child or Teen Need Help with Grief?

Grief is a normal response to the death of a loved one. Grief is not a mental illness that requires therapy. However, because we live in a death-denying society in which children have been shielded from death, experiencing a death is extremely difficult. Children and teens should not be expected to figure it out on their own.

Yes, they need assistance with this major life event.

The Burden of Grief:

- The death of a parent or sibling is one of the most stressful life events a child can experience.
- Children feel isolated in their grief, because they usually don't know anyone else their age who has experienced a death.
- Children will act as if they are doing "okay" as long as they possibly can to avoid adding worry or sadness to their grieving family members.
- Carrying the burden of grief silently and alone is a huge burden that can have immediate and long -term negative consequences for children.

Immediate negative consequences of grieving alone:

- Difficulty concentrating in school
- Carrying feelings of guilt or responsibility about the death
- Worry, anxiety and stress about the future for themselves & their family
- Disturbances in sleep, appetite, and getting along with others
- Physical complaints such as headaches, stomach aches, and lack of energy
- Isolation and withdrawal from friends and activities

Long-term negative consequences of unresolved grief (grief that is not addressed):

- Academic and behavior problems in school
- Long-term depression, anxiety and problems with anger
- Patterns of challenging authority (school suspension, involvement with juvenile system)
- Difficulty establishing close relationships
- Negative, pessimistic outlook on life

No child should have to grieve alone.

Children need a safe place to talk about their grief. Participation in a grief support group helps end isolation, normalizes the intense emotions of grief, and helps children and teens develop better communication and coping skills.