



## 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.

*No one should  
grieve alone!*