

When Should I Get Help?

- If your child is having difficulty completing typical, everyday activities several weeks after the death
- If your child expresses excessive feelings of hopelessness
- If your child expresses a desire to intentionally harm self or others
- If your child is engaging in self-injurious behaviors, such as drug use, skipping school, intentionally harming self or others
- When you, as the parent, experiences any of the signs listed above

Resources

Bo's Place:

www.bosplace.org

(713) 942-8339

DePelchin Children's Center:

<http://www.depelchin.org/>

(713) 730-2335

MHMRA of Harris County:

www.mhmraharris.org

(713) 970-7070



Psychological Services

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SERVICES

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Helping Your Child Cope with Grief:

A Guide for Parents



What Should I Expect from My Child After a Loss?

Feelings

Sadness

Anger

Guilt

Loneliness

Explosive Emotions

Thoughts

“My life will never be the same again”

“What happens to you after you die?”

“Where are they now?”

“Why did God take them?”

“I want to die, so we can be together”

Behavior

Crying

Withdrawal from social interaction

Regression

Repression

Shock / Numbness

Denial

Acting out

Sleep Disturbances

Changes in eating pattern

Loss of interest in activities

Drop in school performance

Decrease in organization

Difficulty paying attention

What Can I Do to Help My Child?

1. Assess their needs – each child handles grief differently; help them figure out what they need
2. Reassure them of safety – your child may be concerned about their own mortality; let them know that they are not in danger
3. Encourage your child to express their feelings in a comfortable way – talking, writing, drawing, crafts, etc
4. Listen to your child / Don't interrupt - let your child talk about their feelings without judging them
5. Answer their questions appropriately – do not give the child more information than they can handle for their age
6. Watch for signs of distress – such as drug use or significant behavior changes
7. Be available to comfort them – your child may need extra attention
8. Teach your child how to decrease level of stress – talk to them about taking good care of themselves
9. Help them return to normal routine when they are ready – children find comfort in returning to their structure
10. Keep the school informed - communicate with the teachers
11. Let your child know that it is ok to feel happy
12. Take time to deal with your own feelings

What if you're grieving, too?

- Take time for yourself
- Pay attention to your own needs and emotions
- Remember that you can not take away your child's pain completely
- Be honest with your child about your feelings: your expression of feelings allows your child to know that it is ok to feel and express their emotions
- Find another adult to talk to about your reactions
- Keep regular schedules and routines for family activities
- Ask family and friends for help when you need support

Grief Related Books for Adults:

Guiding Your Child Through Grief

by James P. Emswiler and Mary Ann Emswiler

Healing Your Grieving Heart

by Alan D. Wolfelt

Healing A Child's Grieving Heart

by Alan D. Wolfelt