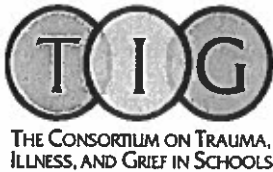




Grief & Loss: Twelve Ways to Help

1. **Offer opportunities to talk** about death and loss as they experience it in everyday life.
2. **Include youth** in rituals whenever possible and appropriate.
3. **Share** your expressions of sadness and pain.
4. **Be available** to listen.
5. **Pay attention** to a youth's behavior and let them know when you notice a change.
6. **Answer all questions** about death and loss as honestly as possible.
7. **Be willing to wonder** and explore answers to their questions.
8. **Face your own feelings** of grief.
9. **Do not isolate or insulate young people from grief.** Remember grief is normal.
10. **Continue to expect a young person to function.** Be firm, yet gentle and kind.
11. **Find help** for youth who need it. Refer to support groups or counseling as needed.
12. **Continue to be available** over time

Remember grief will be revisited throughout their lives. Reach out and continue to care, just as you are now!



Helping Teenagers Cope with Traumatic Loss

Grief tends to be mixed with trauma when a loss is sudden and unexpected. Grief is a normal reaction to loss, with its symptoms diminishing over time. If the loss is sudden or unexpected this natural reaction may be delayed by feelings of worry or fear, shock, and a traumatic response. There are ways to help support a teenager through these reactions and throughout the grief process.

Listen and Give Support

- Explain what has happened and answer their questions honestly and truthfully
- Listen to their words and pay attention to their feelings. Watch their body language.
- Encourage teens to express their feelings and reactions so you can help them deal with all that is going on inside of them in a safe place.
- Be patient and supportive and assure them that their reactions are understandable, common and normal. Do not rush their process.
- Do not be judgmental and punitive. Teens need to feel safe with you, especially when they are feeling scared and hurt.
- Remember that anyone who experiences a traumatic loss may feel scared and vulnerable and needs to feel emotionally safe.
- Do not tell the teens how they should feel and react. Listen and support them as they share.
- Tell them what you appreciate about them. Teens need positive support after trauma or traumatic loss even more than usual.

Be Understanding and Accepting

- Concentration and memory are often impaired and teens may need help getting work done.
- Understand that teens often want to be with their friends and not their families.
- Know that teens may exhibit childish, immature behaviors, regress back to earlier stages of development and then act very mature and adult.
- Remember that everyone recovers differently and that teens may seem to be fine at first and then need help later.

Encourage and Be Involved

- Help teens get back into a routine as soon as possible even if they cannot do all they used to do.