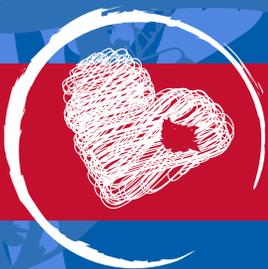


Richmond's
Bereavement
Resource Manual
2016



created by **Full Circle** Grief Center

Purpose

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This manual is designed to serve as an educational resource guide to grieving families and bereavement professionals in the Central Virginia area and to provide a practical list of available national and local support services. It is meant to be a useful reference and is not intended as an exhaustive listing.

At Full Circle Grief Center, we realize that each person's grief journey is unique and personal, based on many factors. We hope that some aspect of this manual will help you and your family along the way. Keep in mind that there is no "right" or "wrong" way to cope with your grief. After losing a loved one, family members have varying ways of coping and may require different levels of support over time.

Grief is not neat and tidy. This manual offers some commonalities and basic information with the hope that it will be helpful to you and your family.

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Full Circle Grief Center

For additional information, including Full Circle's latest program schedule, please visit us online at fullcirclegc.org

You may also contact us by calling
(804) 912-2947
or stopping by our center located at
**10611 Patterson Avenue
Building 201
Richmond, VA 23238**

At Full Circle, families will find

- Trained, nurturing grief counselors
 - A unique group model
- Support for the entire family
 - Creative outlets
- Acceptance of experiences and feelings
 - Opportunity to play
- A chance to remember and commemorate a loved one

Full Circle is a comprehensive grief resource center whose mission is to provide children and their families with creative ways to express their grief and remember their loved one. Our organization offers grief counseling groups, remembrance programs, and educational services to children, adults, and families.

We have created an environment where personal relationships are built with each family and these connections are cultivated throughout the family's grief journey. We take the time to get to know each individual, learn their story of loss, and find the ways to best support them, wherever they are in their grief journey. We enroll families in our programs, refer them to community organizations or professionals who can provide additional services, and communicate with them on a regular basis. All of our services are provided by counselors or social workers with extensive experience in the bereavement field. Our professionals have the training, knowledge, and experience to properly support children, adolescents, and adults and develop a customized plan that will assist them in the best possible way. Full Circle strives to create a compassionate place where families feel comfortable, find ongoing support and resources, share their experiences, and begin healing.

All of the services at Full Circle are offered at no cost. Participants are asked to make a donation for services, but all may participate regardless of ability to contribute.



It's easy to feel isolated in my loss. Full Circle not only provides me with a community that relates to my loss, but makes me realize I'm not alone and changes my attitude to help me realize how much I still have.

- mother from Hands on Healing group



Grief and Loss

The Grief Experience

Citation: 7 stages of grief: Through the process and back to life. www.recover-from-grief.com

Grief is a normal and natural reaction to the death of a loved one. It is a process which can bring about a variety of emotions, which may remain constant for a period of time or change from day-to-day. Grief may bring about shock, sadness, fear, anger, guilt, and a variety of other emotional and physical changes. There are stages or tasks of grief that many people go through before, during and after the loss of a loved one. While not every person experiences all stages and some experience additional manifestations of their grief, this model does explain what grief may look like, sound like, and how it may feel. Though these stages help to explain what may happen during the grieving process, there is no “proper” or “improper” way to grieve.

Shock and Denial

You will probably react to learning of the loss with numbed disbelief. You may deny the reality of the loss at some level in order to avoid the pain. Shock provides emotional protection from being overwhelmed all at once. This may last for weeks.

Example “I feel fine.” “This can’t be happening, not to me.”

Pain and Guilt

As the shock wears off, it is replaced with the suffering of unbelievable pain. Although excruciating and almost unbearable, it is important that you experience the pain fully and not hide it, avoid it, or escape from it, with substances such as alcohol or drugs. You may have guilty feelings or remorse over things you did or didn’t do with your loved one. Life feels chaotic and scary during this phase.

Example “If I hadn’t asked him to go to the store, he would never have been in the car at all that night.” “I promised my son that we would go to the circus, and I was always ‘too busy.’ I can’t ever get that back.” “The last time my mom and I spoke, we argued about something stupid. How could I not have just said I love you?”

Anger and Bargaining

When frustration gives way to anger, you may lash out and lay unwarranted blame for the death on someone else. This is a time for the release of bottled up emotion. You may rail against fate, questioning “Why me?” You may also try to bargain in vain with the powers that be for a way out of your despair.

Example “Why me? It’s not fair!” “How can he/she leave me alone like this?” “Who is to blame?” “I’ll do anything for a few more years.” “I will give my life savings if...”

Depression, Reflection, and Loneliness

Just when your friends may think you “should be” getting on with your life, a long period of sad reflection will likely overtake you. This is a normal stage of grief, so do not be “talked out of it” by well-meaning outsiders. Encouragement from others may not be helpful to you, especially when others are encouraging you to “move on.” During this time, you begin to finally realize the true magnitude of your loss, and it may be overwhelming. You may isolate yourself on purpose, reflect on things you did with your lost one, and focus on memories of the past. You may sense feelings of emptiness or despair.

The Upward Turn

As you start to adjust to life without your loved one, your life becomes a little calmer and more organized. Your physical symptoms lessen, and your extreme sadness begins to lift slightly.

Example Appetite comes back or normalizes, you are able to concentrate on work/school again for varied periods of time and you begin to be able to talk about your loss.

Reconstruction and Working Through

As you become more functional, your mind starts working again, and you will find yourself seeking realistic solutions to problems posed by life without your loved one. You will start to work on practical and financial problems and reconstructing yourself and your life without him or her.

Example “I finally was able to go through his closet and decide which clothes could be donated.” “Due to all of the funeral costs and estate taxes, I realized we would have to sell my mother’s house, so we put it on the market.”

Acceptance and Hope

During this time, you learn to accept and deal with the reality of your situation. Acceptance does not mean instant happiness. Given the pain and turmoil you have experienced, you can never return to the carefree, untroubled YOU that existed before this tragedy. But you will find a way forward.

Example “It’s going to be okay.” “I know I can’t get him/her back but I can find ways to remember all of the good things and preserve wonderful memories.” “Even though she is gone, I must go on.” You will start to look forward and actually plan things for the future. Eventually, you will be able to think about your lost loved one without such intense pain — sadness, yes, but the wrenching pain will be gone. You will once again anticipate some good times to come, and, yes, even find joy again in the experience of living.

The Four Tasks of Grief

Citation: Angela Morrow, RN

Four tasks or phases of grief have been identified, but everyone will move through them differently. You may move through the phases quickly or slowly, you may move through them in different order, or you may skip a phase or task altogether. There is no specified timeline for these phases. However you move through the process will be the right way for you.

1 Numbness

This is the phase immediately following a loss. The grieving person feels numb, which is a defense mechanism that allows you to survive emotionally.

2 Searching and Yearning

This can also be referred to as pining and is characterized by the grieving person longing or yearning for the deceased to return. Many emotions are expressed during this time, and may include weeping, anger, anxiety, or confusion.

3 Disorganization and Despair

The grieving person now desires to withdraw and disengage from others and activities they regularly enjoyed. Feelings of pining and yearning become less intense while periods of apathy and despair continue.

4 Reorganization and Recovery

In this final phase, the grieving person begins to return to a new state of “normal.” Weight loss experienced during the intense grieving phase may be regained, energy levels increase, and an interest to return to activities of enjoyment returns. Grief never ends, but thoughts of sadness and despair are diminished while positive memories of the deceased take over.

Reactions to Grief

Citation: Children and Grief 101 and Karla Helbert, LPC

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You may have many different emotions and thoughts during the grieving process. There are no “normal” or “abnormal” emotions, no right or wrong way to feel, no timeline for when you should start feeling certain ways.

Emotional

Emotional reactions to grief may include shock or numbness, disbelief, extreme sadness, hopelessness, anxiety, frustration, despair, anger, loneliness, guilt, tiredness, etc. Some of us may also feel emotions such as relief or freedom. This can be especially true if the one who died suffered from a long illness, whether mental or physical. All of these emotions are normal and absolutely okay to have.

If the death is accidental or sudden, the shock/denial stage may last longer, as may the anger stage. Because the ones left behind have not had time to prepare, believing and accepting that the person is truly gone may be more difficult. As with all grieving, there is no “right” or “wrong” way to react. For example, your reaction (anger) might be different from that of your child’s (sadness) or your spouse’s (shock).

Intellectual

Intellectual reactions, or thoughts, you or your child may have during a time of grief may include forgetfulness, disorganization, inability to concentrate or retain information, becoming easily frustrated or impatient, daymares (disturbing memories and dream-like fantasies during the day that may be related to the death), lack of interest or motivation in things that they or you used to love, or rational and irrational fears or worries. It might take you much longer to do what previously took you only a few minutes. This is because your body and mind are working so hard to cope with your loss; the completion of seemingly easy tasks takes a lot more effort. You and your children are under a lot of stress.

Be patient with yourself and with your children if this occurs. Here are some things that may help:

- Allow ample time to complete tasks.
- Write down important things.
- Establish routines and schedules.
- Be patient and gently refocus yourself or your child.
- Break directions down into smaller segments when giving them to your children (don’t tell them several things to go do at once, give them one at a time).
- Read out loud.
- Work on a task for 10-20 minute segments with 5 minute breaks (this is particularly helpful with homework for children).
- Remind yourself and your children not to take your grief out on other people.
- Practice how to ask for help and understanding.
- Give yourself moments alone to relax, meditate, or just cry.

Spiritual

Spiritually, you or members of your family may be mad at religious deities or God. You might ask questions such as...

Why did (God) let him die?

What did I do to deserve this?

Why have I been left alone?

Why is (God) punishing me?

All of these questions are normal reactions to loss and may be part of your grieving process. There are no easy answers, but if prayer or meditation is part of your beliefs, using it during this difficult time may help you sift through these types of questions and feelings you have while you come to terms with the death.

Physical

Our minds and bodies are deeply connected. Grief affects not only emotions and thoughts but our physical bodies as well. You or your family members may experience changes in your bodies that seem odd or unexplainable. Some people may become overtired and sleep for hours and hours, whereas others may have trouble sleeping at all. Some may have a loss of appetite, and others may cover up emotions by overeating. You or your children may experience headaches, stomachaches, dry mouth and skin, extreme fatigue, increased sensitivity to noise, and soreness or aches and pains in the body. Your body's symptoms may relate to the areas of pain for the person who died (i.e. stomach cancer – stomachaches for you or your child). You may cry a lot or you may feel incapable of crying. Your energy levels may dip way down, and you may feel like you can't get in enough air when you are breathing. All of these are symptoms of grief.

Children may regress, or display behavior characteristic of children younger than they are (bed-wetting, clinginess, whining, crying, etc.). Also, children, particularly teenagers, may display risk-taking or impulsive behaviors that are out of character. While some of this is normal, it is important to be open and discuss this behavior when it first begins to avoid dangerous situations and consequences. It may be difficult to drag yourself or other family members out of bed at all. However, the more you can interact with the world in a positive, pro-social way, while still taking time for the rest you need, the better you will cope. Don't forget to give yourself permission to take a day when you need it. You can also practice muscle relaxation and deep breathing to combat some of these physical symptoms.

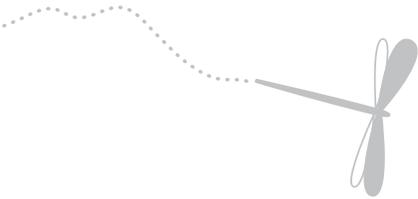
Try the following exercises yourself or with friends/family. They are good for children too!

Deep Breathing Activity Sit in a comfortable position with your hands relaxed, either in your lap or on your knees. Relax your shoulders by pulling them up toward your ears and then allow them to drop, creating space between your ears and your shoulders. Breathe normally in and out for a few breaths. Notice how your belly rises and falls easily as you breathe naturally. Your chest should not rise a great deal as you breathe in and out. Place your hand on your belly to notice the movement as you breathe in and out.

When you are ready, breathe in and on the next exhalation, breathe out slowly through your nose, counting to five. During this exhalation, tighten your abdominal muscles, and pull your diaphragm inward to help squeeze all the excess air out of your lungs. When all the air is squeezed out, pause for two counts and inhale slowly again, to the count of five, allowing your belly to expand as you breathe in. If you are comfortable doing so, close your eyes and repeat this easy deep breath 5-10 times.

If you find that your mind wanders during this exercise, don't worry. Simply bring your focus back to your breathing and begin your counts to five again. You may find it helpful to think of a happy color or a calming color as you breathe in and a dreary or sad color as you breathe out.

Muscle Relaxation Activity Once you get the hang of the breathing, if you would like, you can add muscle relaxation to your breathing. Focus on a particular muscle or area of the body. On your inhale, squeeze tight a particular muscle that feels tight or hurts. Release the muscle on your exhale. Release and relax the muscle deeper and deeper as you let all of the air out of your lungs on each exhale. Repeat this until you feel the muscle relax or improve.



Children, Teens and Grief

Developmental Stages

Citation: 7 stages of grief: Pam Reese Comer, LPC., Shenandoah Valley Grief Center in Harrisonburg, VA

Children often grieve very differently than adults. It has been said that children grieve in “spurts,” often playing, suddenly crying for a lost loved one, and then returning to happy, normal behavior. Because they do not “show” their grief like adults, we often assume that they are not grieving and do not need support or that they simply do not understand. Most children can only endure these intense feelings of grief for a short period of time. It is not uncommon for children to seem to be coping well with a death and then experience behavioral changes a few months after the loss. It is possible that it takes a child longer to realize the meaning and impact of what has occurred, or the child waits to express his grief until his environment seems more stable and safe.

It is important for children to be given the opportunity to experience and express their feelings of grief, such as sadness, anger, relief, confusion, etc. They need support in understanding what happened, identifying their feelings, and embracing their loved one’s memory. Below, we have outlined the developmental stages of grief, which should be used as a reference tool only. Obviously, each child is different; therefore, his experience with a significant loss will be unique.

Children 0-3

Children of this age will notice what is different in the family or home. They may regress in behavior (act younger than they are) or become more demanding. Comfort, consistency and attention to their sensitivity are important. Just because verbal expression is limited does not mean the child is not grieving.

Children 3-5

Children of this age do not see death as permanent. Cartoons are real. People leaving is scary for children, and they often blame themselves due to “magical thinking.” They assume that if you die, you can come back to life, so they may not react to a death with the same sadness and grief as older children or adults might. Reassurance, calm support, and efforts to normalize life with their everyday routines are what these children need. Explaining what happened in short, clear ways can be helpful.

Children 6-9

Children of this age may have begun to develop an understanding of the irreversible nature of death. Curiosity about details might be stronger at this age level. As they process the loss, fears may arise; so clear conversations and support are still helpful. Watch for a continued tendency to blame themselves because they still believe thoughts make things happen.

Children 9-12

Children of this age definitely see the permanence of death, but may feel removed from the experience. Interest in the vivid details may be stronger as they reach to understand what has happened. Children at this age may express more concern over practical issues and what will change. A good listening ear is very important as verbal skills are developing. Listen carefully and respond appropriately. These children are ready for more information, but remember that this is a crucial time of development. One foot in childhood and one in adolescence is an exciting and scary place to be for some children!

Teenagers

Adolescents do not like to be considered children, and do not want to be viewed by peers as different. Often, he/she does not want to associate with adults as much as they did. So adolescents can enter into a death or loss experience with many complex dynamics already in play. A loss makes all of us feel like a child again – teenagers will feel uncomfortable with this and find it difficult to handle. If the teen loses a parent, they may have a tendency to take on duties or roles that are not age appropriate. In other words, a teen needs to be allowed to be a teen. This child needs a parent/guardian to be a parent/guardian first and a friend second. She needs a good listening ear, non-judgmental approach, open door policy and encouragement to express her grief in whatever way works (and that may not be with all of the adults in her life!) Often, teens lean on their friends more than family as they grieve. But, don't be discouraged. Still let your child know that you are there to listen, when they would like to talk.

According to Pamela Gabbay, MA, teens worry most about the following:

- Other surviving family members
- The chance that someone else may die
- Feeling different at school or in the neighborhood
- Their future
- Whether the person who died was proud of them

Helping children is not hard. It means remembering what you needed as a child and – whether you got it or not – giving it to children. The goal of grief work as children or adults is to make the loss a part of you and to grow from it. You are forever changed. Life becomes about creating a new normal.

Talking to Youth about Death

Citation: Alan Wolfelt, PhD, C.T.

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It is important to talk to children about death in simple but matter-of-fact terms. Normalize death (it happens to everyone and every living thing but usually when we are very old) and be clear about what it means. If death is not discussed at all, it becomes scarier when it affects a child's life. There are many wonderful books, some of which are listed in this manual, that help families explain death and dying to children.

General guidelines on how to talk to grieving children:

- Talk openly about death.
- Share your feelings.
- Be honest and direct.
- Avoid euphemisms.
- Teach what you believe about afterlife.
- Give inviting, loving nonverbal cues.
- Attend to your own grief.

Strategies for Talking to Children Ages 2-6

1 Start Early

Talk about death starting at an early age by using everyday examples from TV or the death of animals. This will help them view death as part of the natural life cycle.

2 Tell It How It Is

Use simple, truthful words like “dead,” “dying,” “died,” “buried,” or “cremated.” Dead means not moving, not breathing, not seeing, and not feeling. The person’s or animal’s body does not work anymore. Though it may sound nicer to you to use phrases that make death sound less final, it can be very confusing to the child.

Examples of confusing explanations:

“We lost him.”

Child’s response Let’s go look for him! Can’t the police help? If I’m lost, will they look for me?

“He passed away.”

Child’s response Where is away? Can we go there?

“She went for a long trip.”

Child’s response Where did she go? When will she get back? What do you mean she’s not coming back if it’s just a trip?

“We had to put Fluffy to sleep.”

Child’s response Why isn’t he waking up like I do? Will I be able to wake up? (Sleeping means dead, so I’d better not go to sleep.)

“God took her from us.”

Child’s response Why would God do that? You’re not supposed to take things from other people. I want to take her back!

“God wanted Dad in heaven with him.”

Child’s response God takes people from us. How could God love us?

3 Tell The Truth

Do not “protect” a child from someone who is dying or from the cause of death. Be honest about what is happening (in age appropriate terms) and let him see you express your emotions. Define new words he may be hearing.

4 Encourage Questions

Ask for questions the child may have but do not volunteer complex information about which the child has not asked. Tell him the main facts and do answer all of his questions simply and promptly. If you don’t know, it’s ok to say that you don’t know. Ask the child what he thinks the answer might be.

5 Allow All Feelings

Encourage the child to express feelings openly. Crying is normal and helpful. Many children express anger towards the person for dying and leaving them. It is important to allow them to express these feelings and let them know it is ok to have them. (Anger is one of the stages of grief.)

6 Express Yourself

Share your feelings with the child. Seeing you upset will not make the child worse. It lets him know you are hurting too. Allow the child to comfort you – this makes him feel helpful and needed. It’s ok for children to see you cry.

7 Be Patient

Know that children need to hear “the story” and to ask the same questions again and again. This is how he is processing it. You may also see it in his play.

8 What Ifs

“Are you going to die too?” “What will happen to me if you die?” If the child is worried about the surviving parent or siblings dying, tell the child who will take care of him or her in that case but offer reassurance that they are not likely to die anytime soon. Point out elderly people the child knows or sees and discuss how many people live to old age.

9 Exposure

Limit the amount of exposure to television if the death is being publicized. This can increase nightmares, worry, and expose children to knowledge of unnecessary details.

10 Reassurance

Reassure the child of his safety at home and at school.

11 Outlets

Maintain daily routines as much as possible, as this signifies safety to a child. But, allow your gut to guide you about when you need to be flexible. Give the child a chance to play and spend time with you, as this is how the child will express what is going on inside. More specific suggestions for constructive outlets for grief are discussed in the section of this manual entitled “self care.”

Strategies for Talking to Children Ages 7-12

Use all of the information from “Talking to Children Ages 2-6,” but be prepared to go into more detail and answer more questions.

- 1 When children ask “morbid” or “distasteful” questions about the body and death, it is best to answer them promptly, simply, and to the point. In order to determine how much information a child can handle, notice how he reacts to the simplest information before going into the details. Do not be too graphic (particularly in the case of accidents and violent deaths) as this will only create difficult mental images for the child.
- 2 If the child is experiencing unrealistic feelings of guilt because he or she thinks they somehow caused the death, discuss these feelings with the child and help him to clear up this misconception.
- 3 Many children express anger towards the person for dying and leaving them. It is important to allow them to express these feelings and let them know it is ok to have them. (Anger is one of the strong feelings of grief.)
- 4 If the child is worried about the surviving parent or siblings dying, tell the child who will take care of him in that case but offer reassurance that they are not likely to die anytime soon.
- 5 Point out elderly people the child knows or sees and discuss how many people live to old age.
- 6 Don't be afraid to share your own feelings of grief and sorrow with the child. By allowing the child to see your tears, you teach the child that it is acceptable to express his emotions too.
- 7 By watching you move through the stages of your grief and begin to heal, the child learns that life goes on and that people can recover to rebuild their lives while still keeping the deceased in their hearts.

Strategies for Talking to Adolescents

Adolescents or teenagers are a bit different because of the desire to fit in with their peers and “deal” with things. They are at a stage in their lives where they are breaking away from the family and bonding with peers. A death in the family challenges this role. Adolescents may feel different from their peers due to the death so they may suppress many of their feelings of grief in an attempt to fit in. Naturally changing hormones and mood swings may increase the intensity of the grief at times, making it even more difficult to cope.

The following may help in talking to adolescents during this time:

- 1 Educate them about normal reactions to grief so they know they are not going crazy and can trust the way their minds, bodies, and emotions are reacting. If this is difficult, provide movies or books (many of which are listed in this manual) they can look at on their own.
- 2 Encourage them to express what the grief experience is like for them. Recognize and affirm that the experience is likely to be different from others’ in the family. Model appropriate expressions of emotion yourself so that they can follow your example. If they prefer not to talk, suggest using other outlets: a journal to write in, art, photography, sports, music, etc.
- 3 Tell stories about the person who died. Keep photos of him up and around the house. Discuss going to the grave site. Listening to what your teen says will be helpful to him. This may take time.
- 4 Talk about how you do not expect your teen to take on an adult role now that someone important has died. Encourage normal teenage activities once he is ready to re-engage in them. He may be ready right away and use them as a coping mechanism or it may take time, as grieving takes a lot of energy. Be encouraging and let him know you love him and will support him always.

THOUGHTS FROM TEENS ABOUT DEATH AND GRIEF

After the death, the most difficult part was...

Citation: National Alliance of Grief Children, www.nagc.org

“

“Not seeing him every day and talking to him.”

“Adapting to life without my mom- she was my best friend.”

“Going to school with the weight of thinking about it.”

“My friends don’t know what to say.” Or “I lost some of my friends because they didn’t know what to do.”

“I am angry about how many regrets I have.”

“I pretended to be strong. No one would have guessed the turmoil inside of me.”

“I just want to be normal again.”

Questions about Death

Citation: National Alliance of Grief Children, www.nagc.org

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When your children ask questions about death, burial, the afterlife, etc. be honest, limit details, and use your own spiritual beliefs to guide you. Here are a few possibilities of how you might answer some of these questions, though you may choose to alter your response to fit your personal experiences:

? **What is dead?**

Dead means not alive anymore. Things like people, animals, and trees and plants are alive. When they die, they stop breathing because their bodies don't need air. Their hearts stop beating and their bodies don't work anymore. They don't eat or drink or sleep when they die (Based on your spiritual beliefs, you may discuss where their soul is, etc).

? **Why do things have to die?**

Birth and death are the cycle of life. Every living thing goes through it because that is the way the world works. (Use a leaf/flower as an example). But, just because someone's body dies, it does not mean they are gone from our hearts. We remember them when we do their favorite things, eat their favorite foods, and make the best parts of them part of ourselves.

? **Will I die or Will you die?**

Someday you/I will. All living things are born and all living things die. But, most people die when they are very old. Do you notice very old people in our world? Yes, there are many so you know many people live for a long time. (Reassure the child that it is not likely that you will die soon but if you do, tell them who will take care of them.)

? **What happens when someone is buried?**

(Person's name) won't feel anything because she died. It is just her body. You don't have feelings when you are dead.

? **What happens after you die?**

No one really knows for sure what happens. What do you think might happen? Use your own spiritual beliefs to guide you in answering this question.

How To Talk To Children About Specific Types of Death

Citation: How to talk to children and teens about death, suicide, funerals, homicide, cremations and other end-of-life matters by Alan D. Wolfelt, PH.D., C.T.

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When a Parent Dies

When a child loses a parent, it is important to reassure him that you are there to care for him.

When a child says, "Where is mommy? When will she be home?"

Response "Mommy is dead, and she isn't coming back, but we are here to take care of you and love you."

Or when a young person says, "Mom won't be there to see me graduate."

Response "I understand that will be difficult. I know graduation is an important time for you, and you want everyone you love to share it with you. I am sorry she can't be here, but the rest of us will be right beside you."

When a Sibling Dies

Siblings often share strong feelings for each other, including feelings of love and caring, as well as feelings of jealousy and competition. Ambivalent feelings can complicate grief and create a sense of guilt or self-blame.

When a young person says, "It should have been me who died, not Sam."

Response "Each person's life is precious and I care about you both very much. You are just as worthy of life as Sam was. What are you feeling?"

When a Grandparent Dies

When a child says, "Why couldn't the doctors stop Grandma from dying?"

Response "Many times doctors save people from dying, but sometimes they try their best and the person still dies. Their body is just too broken to fix, like Grandma's. Most people go to hospitals to get better, but once in a while, people die."

When a Friend or Classmate Dies

When a child says, "I can't believe this happened."

Response "It might take a while to sink in, and that's OK. You are in shock right now, and that is normal when you find out someone has died. Shock means you feel disbelief and numbness. You may be unable to believe it happened, or you may want to deny that Maddie died. Is that how you feel?"

When Someone Dies by Suicide

When a child asks, "How did Uncle Matt die?"

Response "Do you know how our bodies can get sick? Well, Uncle Matt's brain got sick and it hurt so bad that he chose to stop living."

Or if a young person asks, "What is suicide?"

Response "Suicide happens when someone gets very depressed, which is like being sad times 100 without a break. It hurts a lot and makes a person want to stop the hurt. Sometimes, someone may think the only way he can stop hurting is to stop living."

If they ask, "Why did he do it?"

Response "I don't know for sure, but I do know he felt that life was very hard for him and just didn't know how to stop his pain, or what he was trying didn't work. I know it's hard to understand. I struggle with it too. I do know he really cared for you, though, and his death had nothing to do with you."

When Someone Dies by Homicide

Grief after the traumatic death of a loved one to homicide or manslaughter is often complicated by feelings of turmoil, distrust, injustice, and hopelessness. It is important to provide young people with loving care and extra support from others immediately and for months following the death.

When a child says, "Why did he kill Joshua? Joshua was a good person! Why couldn't it have been someone else?"

Response "I know it makes no sense and, you are right, it is unfair. You know, it can help to write about it. How about you write a letter to the bad person and tell him how awful it feels to be without Joshua?"

About the Funeral

When a child asks, “What is a funeral? What happens at a funeral?”

Response “A funeral is when friends and family get together to remember the person who died. We go to the service and sit quietly with other people who knew and care about Uncle Ned. People will take turns talking about Uncle Ned, singing, and reading poems or telling stories about him. Some people will be crying, and, at times, some people may laugh. Do you think you would like to attend Uncle Ned’s funeral?”

When a child asks, “What is cremation?”

Response “Cremation is when a body is put into a room with lots of heat until it turns to ashes. The crematory, where they cremate the body, gives the family the ashes, and we can sprinkle them as a group in places that were special to Uncle Ned, like up at his cabin.”

“Child Speak” for Death and Mourning Rituals

Citation: Michelle Post, LMFT, www.Michelle-Post.com and Alan Wolfelt, Healing the Bereaved Child

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These simple words and definitions may be helpful in explaining death to a child.

Ashes

What is left of a dead body after cremation; is white or grey in color, and looks and feels like tiny rocks or chunky sand.

Burial

Placing the body (inside a casket or urn) into the ground at a special place called a cemetery.

Casket

A special box (usually four-sided) for burying a dead body.

Cemetery

A place where many dead bodies and ashes are buried. (One child called it the ‘people park’ because it often looks like a park with grass and trees.)

Columbarium

A small building at a cemetery where ashes are placed.

Cremation

The process of turning a dead body into ashes. The body is placed in a special box at the crematorium, and it is heated until it turns into ashes.

Dead

When a person’s body stops working, i.e. it doesn’t see, hear, feel, eat, breathe, etc. anymore.

Funeral

A ceremony where friends and family get together for a time to say goodbye to and remember or share memories of the person who died. Sometimes the body can be viewed at the ceremony.

Funeral Home

A place where bodies are kept until they are buried or cremated. Sometimes the funeral or viewing can happen here.

Grave

The hole in the ground where the body is buried at the cemetery.

Headstone

The sign that marks the place where the body is buried or ashes are placed. It is often made of stone or metal and may be engraved with the person’s name, date of birth, and date of death. The ‘head’ is not placed inside the stone (also called the grave marker).

Hearse

The special car that takes the dead body in the casket to the grave (often at the cemetery).

Memorial Service

See funeral for definition of ceremony. Usually the body is not viewed at this ceremony (also can be called a ‘celebration of life’).

Obituary

A short article in the newspaper that tells about the person who died.

Pallbearers

The people who help carry the casket at the funeral.

Scattering

When the ashes of the cremated body are emptied onto a special place (in the air or water or on the ground). Can be a ceremony with family and friends.

Urn

A special container that holds and protects the ashes of the cremated body.

Viewing

The time when people can see the body of the person who died and say goodbye.

The Parent or Guardian’s Role

Citation: Grief at School by The Hospice of Virginia

The “Grief at School” program from Hospice of Virginia succinctly describes a number of things that parents or guardians can do (some of which have already been discussed in previous sections) to help children through the grieving process:

- Focus on your children. Watch for unusual behavior or physical symptoms.
- Reassure them of your love and their safety.
- Make time to talk and monitor what they are thinking and feeling.
- Be a good listener, without judging. Allow all feelings to be expressed and accepted.
- Stay physically close to your children. This will reassure them and allow you time to observe their behavior. Extra hugs and cuddling may help! Remember, it is common for children’s behavior to regress (for children to act younger than they are) during grieving.
- Limit the amount of television exposure if the event is publicized. If the event is not publicized, also limit television programs that may be scary or traumatic. They have enough to deal with in their own lives right now.
- Maintain daily routines but be flexible.
- Spend extra time with your children (reading, playing games).
- Protect their health. Make sure children are getting the appropriate amount of sleep, exercise, and nutrition. If any or all of these remain difficult after a few weeks, consider consulting professional help.
- Provide a positive outlet of expression of grief: creative projects, family time, or religious rituals depending on your personal beliefs.
- Involve the school. Find out what resources your child’s school has available. Call your child’s school counselor for ideas and advice, as well as resources and referrals. The more the school knows about the tragedy and how your child is coping, the more the staff can help.

Supporting Your Child Through the Death of Parent/Immediate Family

Follow guidelines in “The Parent’s Role” and keep these issues in mind as well:

Manage your own grief and prioritize your own self care.

Many children do not begin to truly grieve until their parent(s) are further along in their own process. By managing your own grief and taking care of yourself, you model good coping skills for your children and help them grieve themselves.

Talk if they need to talk and even if they don’t.

If you are open and honest about the feelings you feel, your children will feel safe in sharing their feeling with you. It is ok to cry together, tell them when you are feeling sad, and share age-appropriate thoughts with them. Again, you are modeling positive coping skills.

Realize importance of rituals and remembrance.

Even if it is painful to remember the loved one who died, it is especially important to do so on anniversaries and special events so that your child knows that death does not mean forgetting. Try to make these remembrance activities fun: make the loved one’s favorite meal together or do something as a family that the loved one liked to do. The more positive memories that the child can associate with remembering the one who died, the better able they will be to cope.

Recognize resurfacing.

Grief is a tricky thing. There will be developmental milestones in your child’s life when grief will resurface, particularly during times of change (anniversary of the death, holidays, new school, moving, puberty, graduation, college, etc.) Be ready for these times and show your support through them.

Supporting Your Child Through the Death of Friend/Classmate/Peer

Follow guidelines in “The Parent’s Role” and keep these issues in mind as well:

Limit details.

As previously advised, discuss the main events of the death with your child and answer any questions they may have, but do not go into unnecessary detail. Younger children may not have as difficult a time with a peer’s death (unless they were very close to the child or witnessed the death) as an older child or teenager might. Meet them where they are emotionally.

Talk it out.

Listen to and accept the feelings your child expresses regarding the death of the peer. Know that this death may bring up memories or feelings associated with other losses your child has experienced in the past.

Allow for expression of feelings.

Allow your child to take part in ritual activities if they are organized by the school or religious organization. If not, call the school counselor or Full Circle to see if you can help in holding a ritual for the peer group. Look at the section in this manual entitled “Rituals and Remembrance Activities” for ideas.

Talking to Children about Violence: Tips for Parents and Teachers

Citation: National Association of School Psychologists www.nasponline.org

Reassure children that they are safe.

Validate their feelings. Explain that all feelings are okay when a tragedy occurs. Let children talk about their feelings, help put them into perspective, and assist them in expressing those feelings appropriately. Make time to talk. Let their questions be your guide as to how much information to provide. Keep your explanations developmentally appropriate. Be patient. Children and youth do not always talk about their feelings readily but watch for clues that they may want to talk.

Observe children’s emotional state.

Changes in behavior, appetite, and sleep patterns can indicate a child’s level of anxiety or discomfort. In most children, these symptoms will ease with reassurance and time. However some children with a past traumatic experience or personal loss, suffer from depression or mental illness, or have special needs may be at greater risk for more intense reactions. Seek help from a mental health professional if you are at all concerned.

Maintain a normal routine.

Keeping to a regular schedule can be reassuring and promote physical health. Ensure that children get plenty of sleep, regular meals, and exercise.



Perinatal Loss and Death of an Infant

Citation: SHARE, Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support, Inc at www.nationalshare.org

The following provides possible answers to frequently asked questions of bereaved parents, friends, and family.

Bereaved Parents

I feel like I am sad all the time. Is this normal? Experiencing the death of a baby can be shocking, and the many emotions you have may be overwhelming. The intense feelings of your grief will not last forever; there will come a time when the heartache is less painful. It is important for you to know that what you are feeling is normal for you. Give yourself permission to grieve. Intense feelings associated with grief can last up to 2 years, but not all that time is spent in deep grief. Incorporating your loss into daily life takes patience and time. When a baby dies, so many expectations and hopes become shattered, and now you face finding ways to put the pieces of life back together when some of them don't fit anymore.

It seems like my spouse isn't grieving for our baby. Why are we so different? The death of a baby can be difficult for both parents. It is important to give yourself permission to grieve the way you need to grieve, and to allow the same for your spouse. You and your partner may have similar feelings, yet you may feel miles apart. You may even have difficulty understanding how your partner is grieving even though you both lost this baby. As much as some people would like one, there is not a step-by-step process for grieving. Everyone grieves differently. Some people are quiet in their grief, choosing solitary activities. Others may be more expressive in how they show grief and may be more assertive in grieving, such as sharing openly, crying, or sharing and making memories. For the quiet griever, they may be perceived as cold and irritable, or even depressed. Your partner may wonder why you don't feel the same emotions at the same times. You may need to take a long walk alone, while your partner may need to be held and hear that you are sad too. It is normal to question your spouse, or for your spouse to question where you are in your grief. People want to know that they are all right and that you are too. Finding ways to express to your partner how you grieve or what you need to get through the death of your baby is invaluable to your relationship.

How do I cope with other people? How will my coworkers understand when I go back to work? Even for someone who has experienced the loss of a baby, your experience is different and unique. Many times people in your life don't know what to say and don't understand you lost a part of you, including the future you were planning with your baby. They may say things they feel are comforting, but make you angry. Most people are not trying to be insensitive to you; they just don't truly understand the impact the death of your baby had on you. The best way to communicate with your friends, family, and coworkers when you are grieving is to be honest and specific in what you need. If you are not a verbal person, write a note telling them how you feel, what you have been through, or how you need to be supported. Depending on the relationships you have built, going back to work may be difficult. It is normal to have feelings of confusion, crying, difficult days, or trouble concentrating. Grief can make a normal day of work unbearable. Do your best to find appropriate ways to communicate your needs as a grieving parent and coworker/friend. As you continue grieving and remembering your baby, days will begin to fall into a new normal pattern.

Grandparent's Grief

Why does the death of my grandchild hurt so much? A grandparent's grief can be a complicated journey. Your grief is twofold. Not only are you mourning the loss of your grandchild, you have lost a part of your son or daughter that will never be the same. Many grandparents feel a sense of helplessness because they are unable to prevent the anguish their own child feels. Life may now seem more fragile and unfair than ever. These feelings may be frustrating, but they are completely normal for grandparents and family to feel as they, too, experience the loss of this baby.

How can I support my son or daughter? Sometimes there is just nothing to say. Just be quiet, be with them, hold their hand, touch their shoulder, or give them a hug. If you can't find the right words say, "I'm sorry," or "I just don't know what to say." Avoid clichés like "Thank goodness you are young, you can have more children," or "God wouldn't give you more than you can handle." What may seem comforting to you may be very hurtful to them. Check up on your son or daughter. Be specific in your offer to help. Perhaps offer to run errands, provide food, or do laundry. After a few weeks, people generally don't stop by as often. Parents need a reminder that they are not alone. One misconception is that the shorter the baby's life, the easier the grief process. The opposite is true. Chances are your child is grieving not only the loss of his or her baby, but their pregnancy or hopes and dreams for the future. Acknowledge the baby by using his or her name. This shows you value the short life of your grandchild.

Avoid giving advice. There are no rules that define how one should feel or how soon one will return to the norms of daily life. Your child needs to be heard without feeling judgment or receiving unwanted advice. Grief can make people more sensitive and vulnerable. It is very difficult to watch your own child grieve, and after some time you may wonder why they have not gotten better. The parents of a baby who dies needs more time to grieve, as the average intense grieving period could be up to 24 months. Parents will go through ups and downs during this time, but allowing them time and being patient will help them grieve. Remember special dates or holidays. Parents, and grandparents, may be saddened by special events or dates like birthdays, due date, delivery date, Mother's or Fathers' Day, because it is a reminder that their baby is not here. Acknowledge how difficult these days may be without the baby, and ask how they are doing. Showing your recognition with hugs, cards, gifts, or special remembrances also helps to create special mementos.

How do I talk to my son or daughter about the future? The future is best held in the hands and hearts of your son or daughter. Allow them to share their thoughts on future pregnancies or children without pressure or prodding. Even though you may have good intentions, encouraging or implying that parents should have more children may make the parents feel as though you are minimizing their loss. When the time is right, your son or daughter will share with you their plans, and it will be all right to share your emotions. Just remember, whether or not there are more children in the future for your son or daughter, it is important to remember and honor your grandchild that died.

Children's Grief

How can I support my grieving child(ren)? Children want to share their experience of grief with adults. Your child's love for the baby may be very special, and it may depend on how much they were included during the pregnancy/birth. Open-ended questions can help you talk and listen to what your child feels. You can ask, "How does that make you feel?" or "What would you like to do for the baby?"

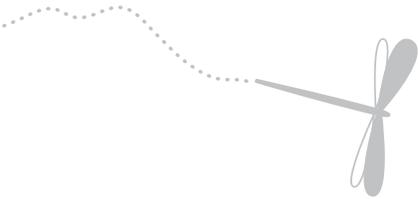
Children need honesty, not deception, when it comes to sharing sad news. Generally, children find ways to cope with grief. It is important to refrain from using clichés, half-truths, and fairy tales that may not explain the mystery of death. Remember that children think literally. Using phrases like "we lost the baby," "the baby is sleeping with God," "the baby went on a long trip," or "the baby is watching over you now" can be confusing because of the literal meaning of the phrases. Use an honest explanation like, "The baby died. That means her heart stopped beating and her body doesn't work anymore. She is not with us like she used to be, but we will always remember and love her very much," explains literally what happened. Use simple and honest explanations. Allow your child to ask questions. Younger children tend to need to repeat the same question again and again. Each time you repeat the answer or story honestly, you are allowing your child to understand it more deeply. Because you too are grieving, this may be a frustrating process. Do your best to be patient and open, as children learn how to cope from your sincere feelings, actions, and responses to their questions.

Ways to Support a Parent Whose Baby Has Died

For many families who are pregnant with or have recently delivered a very loved and wanted baby, hopes and dreams are torn apart with the news that the baby has died. The following information has been gathered by bereaved parents, friends, and professionals.

Here are some ways to better acknowledge the death of a baby and communicate with these parents experiencing grief.

- Say "I am sorry."
- Avoid clichés such as:
 - "Everything happens for a reason."
 - "Thank goodness you are young and can still have more children."
 - "I understand how you feel." (unless you have an experience to share)
 - "There must have been something wrong with the baby."
 - "It was meant to be."
 - "You have an angel in heaven."
 - "At least you didn't get to know the baby."
 - "I guess it's good it happened now."
 - "At least you have other children at home."
 - "God will never give you more than you can handle."
- Silence can be okay.
- Respond to this death just like you would to other deaths. Send flowers, sympathy cards, share special remembrances, phone calls, make/bring dinner. If you are a close family member or friend, it may be helpful if you ask to help maintain laundry, basic house cleaning or cooking, or watch other children at home. Be specific in your offer to help.
- Acknowledge the baby with his/her name. By doing this, you are showing the parents you value the short life of their baby.
- Avoid giving advice.



Suicide Loss

Supporting a Child Through Suicide

Citation: After a Parent's Suicide: Helping Children Heal by Margo Requarth, MA, MFT, www.save.org, and www.afsp.org

Below are tips for talking with children about a suicide death and supporting them through their grief.

- Give the child honest information in doses, suitable for his age. A more detailed explanation may include, “Our thoughts and feelings come from our brain, and sometimes a person’s brain can get very sick. The sickness can cause a person to feel very badly inside. It also makes a person’s thoughts get all jumbled and mixed up, so sometimes he cannot think clearly. Some people can’t think of any other way of stopping the hurt they feel inside. They don’t understand that they don’t have to feel that way, that they can get help.”
- It’s okay to cry and express grief while telling your child. Typical questions from a child include: “Why? What happened? Why would he/she want to leave me?”
- A child should understand that the person who died loved him, but that because of the illness he may have been unable to convey that or to think about how the child would feel after the death.
- Be prepared to talk about the suicide multiple times during the first days and weeks and later throughout the child’s life.
- Reassure your child that it was not his fault. Listen closely without interrupting to what the child believes contributed to his loved one’s suicide.
- Reassure children that they are not responsible for adult decisions.
- Let your child know about depression and mental illness. You may say something like “mental illness changes the chemistry of one’s brain, and can cloud a person’s judgment or decision making and make him feel hopeless. Brain illnesses, just like cancer or heart disease, can cause people to die too.”
- Help your child learn to respond to others about suicide. A child can decide when and with whom to talk about the suicide, as well as what experiences he wishes to share. A child can always say something like “I’m too sad to talk about this” or “I don’t want to talk about this right now.”
- If your child wants to respond, help him have an answer ready. It is good to role play with your child.
- Some children might ask questions related to the morals of suicide- good/bad or right/wrong. It is best to steer clear of this, if possible. Suicide is none of these. It is something that happens when the pain exceeds resources for coping with that pain.

Explaining Suicide to a Child

Citation: AFSP: Survivor Initiatives Department, 2014, 120 Wall Street, 29th Floor, New York, NY 10005

For many adults, suicide can be very upsetting and frightening. If you find yourself having to explain suicide to a child, you may be wondering about the best way to do it. You can even be so overwhelmed that you feel tempted to “protect” the child by saying that the death was caused by a heart attack or an accident, rather than by suicide.

To help, here are some practical guidelines:

- Telling the Truth: If someone dies of a brain illness such as a tumor, you’d intuitively know what to say, even to a young child: “Daddy died of a serious illness in his brain.”
- So it’s important to keep in mind that the research shows that more than 90% of people who die by suicide have a diagnosable (although not always identified) brain illness at the time of their death, most often depression, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia, often complicated by substance abuse. Just as people can die of heart disease or cancer, they can die as a complication of psychiatric illness.
- These illnesses can cause terrible suffering and desperate hopelessness. They can also affect a person’s ability to make appropriate decisions such as whether to seek help, continue treatment, or take prescribed medication.
- If you can begin to see suicide as the tragic outcome of a serious illness, rather than as a moral weakness, a character flaw, irresponsibility, or a hostile act, it will become easier for you to talk about it openly and with compassion.
- Talking about suicide will not increase the risk that others will go on to take their own lives. In fact, like a death from any other serious illness, suicide is now part of the family’s health history. Knowing the truth about mental illness and suicide enables all surviving family members to be appropriately vigilant about their own health going forward, and take preventative steps.
- Although it’s understandable that adults naturally wish to protect children from pain or bad news, shielding children from the truth can undermine trust and create a legacy of secrecy and shame that can persist for generations.
- You can protect children best by offering comfort, reassurance, and honest answers to their questions.

Adults Coping with Suicide

Citation: *Suicide and Its Aftermath: Understanding and Counseling the Survivors* by Edward Dunne, John McIntosh and Karen Dunne-Maxim, www.afsp.org

Here are some suggestions for adults coping with a suicide loss:

- Know you can survive. You may not think so, but you can.
- Know you may feel overwhelmed by the intensity of your feelings, but all your feelings are normal.
- Anger, guilt, confusion, forgetfulness are common responses. You are not crazy—you are in mourning.
- Be aware that you may feel appropriate anger at the person, at the world, at God, at yourself. It's okay to express it.
- You may feel guilty for what you think you did or did not do.
- Guilt can turn into regret through forgiveness.
- Having suicidal thoughts is common. It does not mean that you will act on those thoughts.
- Remember to take one moment or one day at a time.
- Find a good listener with whom to share. Call someone if you need to talk.
- Don't be afraid to cry. Tears are healing.
- Give yourself time to heal.
- Remember, the choice was not yours. No one is the sole influence in another's life.
- Expect setbacks. If emotions return like a tidal wave, you may only be experiencing a remnant of grief, an unfinished piece.
- Try to put off major decisions.
- Give yourself permission to get professional help.
- Be aware of the pain of your family and friends.
- Be patient with yourself and with others who may not understand.
- Set your own limits and learn to say no.
- Steer clear of people who want to tell you what or how to feel.
- Know that there are support groups that can be helpful. If you can't find one, ask a professional to help start one.
- Call on your personal faith to help you through.
- It is common to experience physical reactions to your grief, such as headaches, loss of appetite, inability to sleep.
- The willingness to laugh with others and at yourself is healing.
- Wear out all your questions, anger, guilt, or other feelings until you can let them go. Letting go doesn't mean forgetting.
- Know that you will never be the same again, but you can survive and even go beyond just surviving.



When Additional Support Is Needed

Though many of us are resilient, grief can test us in extreme ways. Grief support can help families and individuals to develop positive ways to cope with emotions and thoughts and help people develop outlets to express their grief and begin to heal. Grief support is not about helping people to “get over it.” People will never and should never get over the loss of those they love.

However, they can learn to work through the grief, heal broken hearts, and make those who have died loving parts of themselves who will always be remembered.

Friends, family, clergy, or mental health professionals may be helpful in supporting individuals and family through the bereavement process. In this section, we have outlined times when specific support may be needed for you or your children.

If you have further questions or concerns, please contact the professionals at Full Circle at (804) 912-2947.

How a Grief Counselor Can Help You Get Through Your Loss

Citation: Adapted from the Care Note of the same name, by Kay Talbot, PhD. <http://www.onecaringplace.com/>

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Grieving is hard work and can feel overwhelming. It takes longer and requires more energy than most people imagine. Even when family and friends care deeply, they may find it difficult to support each other. A grief counselor can help you keep your balance, tolerate the difficult phases of grief, and celebrate your gains.

Choose someone you trust.

A good grief counselor accepts you and your grief and acts as your sounding board. She will respect your pace and is absolutely confidential.

Tell your story.

Your counselor will want to know the details of your loss, your relationship with your loved one, and which aspects of your grief you find most troubling.

Learn about the grief process.

Your counselor can explain common grief reactions and identify warning signals. He can share information about the type of loss you are grieving and how others have coped successfully.

Be open to new ways of coping and understanding.

We never forget our loved ones or the life we had before our loss. Yet over time, we must adopt new roles and build a new identity, to continue growing. This is a huge task and you may need to learn new skills. Experiencing a spiritual crisis is often a part of grieving. A good counselor will help you explore questions of ultimate meaning and hope, without imposing their beliefs or opinions on you.

Work through your past as you create your future.

Love never dies, but what do we do with the bad memories, or the regrets that we often can't bring ourselves to share with others? Grief professionals understand the complexity of relationships. They can help you see the past in new ways and they have ideas for creative memorial rituals that can help you begin a new and more whole relationship with your loved one.

Take heart.

Reconciling our grief does not mean forgetting. It means coming to understand what having our loved one in our life has meant and what not having them with us physically means for our future. You are the only one who can decide what the legacy of your loss will be. A grief professional is an ally who helps you regain control, manage your grief wisely and journey on in healthy ways.

How to Find a Counselor

For those with insurance: call your insurance company and ask for a mental health provider referral. Tell them you want a grief counselor and they will refer you to several who are close to you geographically.

For those with no insurance, North of the river:

Henrico Mental Health (804) 727-8581
Hanover Mental Health (804) 365-4200
Richmond Behavioral Health (804) 819-4000

Also: Jewish Family Services (804) 282-4000 (near Three Chopt and Patterson) and Catholic Charities (804) 285-5900 (near Willow Lawn) have sliding fee scales and serve people of any or no religion.

For those with no insurance, South of the river:

Chesterfield Mental Health (804) 768-7220.

For those with Medicaid, South of the river:

FACTS (Family and Children Treatment Services):
(804) 378-0671

Complicated Grief

Citation: Adapted from Mayo Clinic, 2009. Complicated Grief: Symptoms.

Signs/Symptoms of Complicated Grief

There are times when grief can become overwhelming and regular coping strategies are not enough. Watch for signs and symptoms in your children, other family members, and yourself and be honest about what you see. There is no shame in needing help during such a difficult time. While some of these symptoms are normal following the death of a loved one, continued presence of two or more of these may call for professional intervention.

The following are signs and symptoms that demonstrate the need for additional help in coping with grief:

- Extreme sadness that prohibits the person from continuing with everyday necessary life activities (a month or more)
- Unwillingness to drink/eat for more than a few days
- Suicidal thoughts or a suicidal attempt
- Continual nightmares and/or night terrors for a prolonged period of time (a month or more)
- Sleeping far too little or way too much
- Intense anxiety
- Avoidance of feelings for a prolonged period of time
- Being overwhelmed with emotion, feeling out of control
- Preoccupation with the events of the death so that these thoughts interfere in and disrupt daily living
- Outbursts of irritability or anger at home and/or school
- Difficulty concentrating on things usually enjoyed
- Significant decrease in normal activities at home and/or school
- Detachment or withdrawal from friends or family

When to get additional help for self or child..

If you see two or more of the signs or symptoms of complicated grief in yourself, in your children, or in other family members, please seek additional help. Support may be needed to cope with this grief.

Please refer to the list of resources in this manual for guidance in how to seek this help.

Depression & Anxiety

Citation: Crisislink.org. 2009. Arlington, VA

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Depression/Anxiety Disorders/Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: Depression and anxiety symptoms are common with grief, especially in the early stages. However, if the feelings and behaviors are displayed for weeks into months at severe levels and interfere with the person's ability to cope effectively with everyday life, more help is needed.

Signs of Major Depression: when displayed for three months or more at a time.

- Sadness
- Irritability
- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Low energy and/or restlessness
- Poor concentration
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Dramatic weight gain or loss
- Otherwise unexplained/chronic physical ailments
- Feeling hopeless and helpless
- Feeling worthless and guilty
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Anxiety Disorders: characterized by excessive and persistent fears and worries that interfere with an individual's ability to cope effectively with everyday life.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder is excessive, uncontrollable worry about everyday things. This constant worry affects daily functioning and can cause physical symptoms. The focus of GAD worry can shift, usually focusing on issues like job, finances, health of both self and family; but it can also include more mundane issues such as chores, car repairs, and being late for appointments. The intensity, duration, and frequency of the worry are disproportionate to the issue and interfere with the sufferer's performance of tasks and ability to concentrate.

Panic attacks: defined by the abrupt onset of episodes of intense fear or discomfort, include at least four of the following symptoms:

- A feeling of imminent danger or doom
- The need to escape
- Palpitations
- Sweating
- Trembling
- Shortness of breath or a smothering feeling
- A feeling of choking
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Nausea or abdominal discomfort
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- A sense of things being unreal; depersonalization
- A fear of losing control or "going crazy"
- A fear of dying
- Tingling sensations
- Chills or hot flashes

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): not a disorder to be associated solely with military personnel, as it has been in the past. It has been shown that exposure to traumas such as a serious accident, a natural disaster, or criminal assault can result in PTSD. When the aftermath of a traumatic experience interferes with normal functioning, the person may be suffering from PTSD. PTSD can occur at any age, from childhood to old age, and traumatic stress can be cumulative over a lifetime. Responses to trauma include feelings of intense fear, helplessness, and/or horror.

If these symptoms of depression and/or anxiety are being displayed by those you love or if you are experiencing them for prolonged periods of time and you feel unable to cope with everyday life, please seek the help of a professional.

The Risk of Suicide

Citation: *Crisislink.org, 2009, Arlington, VA www.crisislink.org*

CrisisLink: (703) 527-4077
Support: 1-800-273-TALK
or 1-800-SUICIDE

.....

Extreme grief or the death of a loved one by suicide can increase the risk of suicide in those who have survived the loss and now must cope with it. Below are signs of suicidal behavior. Grief can make emotions run in extremes — highs and lows. If the lows are bad, life can seem hopeless and suicide may be perceived as a possible way out. If you see these in a loved one or are experiencing them yourself, take them seriously and seek help immediately.

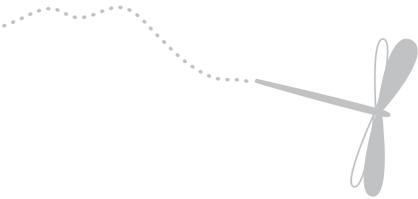
Signs of Suicidal Behavior

Things People Might Say

- “I’m tired of life. I can’t go on.”
- “My family would be better off without me.”
- “Who cares if I’m dead anyway?”
- “I just want out.”
- “I won’t be around much longer.”
- “Soon you won’t have to worry about me.”
- “I wish I were dead.”
- “I’m going to end it all.”
- “I just want to die.”
- “I’m going to kill myself.”
- “If...doesn’t happen, I’m going to kill myself.”

Things People Might Do

- Get a gun or stockpile pills
- Give away prized possessions
- Take more impulsive risks
- Cut themselves or other gestures of self-harm
- Neglect their appearance
- Abuse alcohol and/or drugs
- Isolate themselves/run away/drop out of school
- Show a dramatic change of mood



Self Care

While Grieving

Citation: Karla Helbert, LPC

It is important to take care of yourself and nurture your own grieving process so you will be able to help the ones you love to the best of your abilities. Studies show that when you model appropriate, healthy ways to grieve (talking about your grief, showing emotion, continuing to do activities that you enjoy, eating healthy, exercising, etc.), your children are far more likely to follow suit.

But grieving is hard work. It takes time. It takes energy. It is easy for us to provide you with a list of things to do for selfcare. It is hard to accomplish them while you are grieving. Some parents are so concerned about their children's grief, that they tend to "set" theirs aside to care for their children. The single most important thing you can do for your family is to take time for yourself, be kind to yourself and your loved ones, and remember you are important too. Remember your (and your family's) grief will soften in time. **Even the most difficult of days only have 24 hours in them.**

Outlets for Adults

Me time. Carving out some time for yourself to sit with your feelings and do some processing of your own is extremely important. If your children have difficulty with this, explain why you need this time and tell them where you will be and when you will be back. Take time to go to an exercise or yoga class, write in a journal for 20-30 minutes, go to a support group, meet a friend for lunch, etc. If you need to be by yourself to yell, scream, or cry, that's ok. Keep pillows nearby that you can hit, paper to tear or rip, and objects to stomp on. Time for yourself to release your grief makes you more accessible to your family because you are staying mentally healthy.

Exercise. It is important to keep active even if you would rather stay in bed. The endorphins produced by exercise help you to cope with the other stressors during this difficult time. If you can't get away alone, take daily walks with others. This can also be a great time to talk.

Eating Healthy. While it is tempting to turn to comfort foods during sad times, the best thing you can do for your body is to drink lots of water, eat a balanced diet, plenty of fruits and vegetables, and cut down on snacking. This will also help with your energy level and ability to cope with grief.

Outlets for Children

Me time. Exercise and eating healthy are also important for children!

Encourage time to play. Children often communicate best through their play, so be sure to take time to watch them in imaginative play as well as play with them. You might gain far more insight into what is going on internally than you would through talking alone.

Continue with routine. Routine is very important in establishing normalcy and a sense of control. As soon as possible, return to bedtime routines, music lessons or sports teams. You might ask if the child wants to continue routines they did with the deceased, and give them an option of whom to include.

Creative time. Encourage children and teens to express their feelings through creative arts: music, art (drawing, painting, clay, etc.), writing in a journal, collage, dance, photography, sports, etc.

Transitional objects. Children and teens may want to keep stuffed animals or objects belonging to the deceased close to them for a while. If possible, offer a shirt, picture, special coin, or other object that holds special meaning to help the child keep the one he/she loved close.

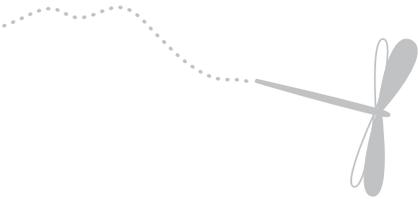


Rituals and Remembrance

Citation: Karla Helbert, LPC

Actively remembering the ones we have loved that have died is what keeps them with us always. Children and adults will never “get over” the death of someone they love. However, they can learn to grow through the grief and discover that that love never goes away (Sims, 1983). While it may be painful to bring up these feelings of grief, especially on birthdays and anniversaries, acknowledging the death and the deceased individual in a positive way truly helps work through those feelings.

- **Make a memory book** that may include pictures, mementos, favorite quotes or sayings, collage, stories from friends of the deceased, etc. that remind the survivors of the loved one who is deceased. It is a resource that allows the deceased to live on in the memories of those he/she left behind.
- **Light a special candle** on holidays, anniversaries, in church, etc. in honor of the person who died.
- **Make a toast** to your loved one at dinner nightly, once a week, or on special occasions.
- **Create a special CD** of music that reminds you of your loved one.
- **Plant a tree or flowers** in your loved one’s memory.
- **Make a donation** to a charity that your loved one supported.
- **Visit your loved one’s burial site.**
- **Carry something special** that reminds you of your loved one with you. Take it out and hold it when you need to.
- **Do a favorite activity** of the person who died on their birthday and/or on the anniversary of their death (watch his/her favorite movie, go to a favorite place, or listen to a favorite song).
- **Make and eat the favorite meal** of the person who died.
- **Create a family painting or collage** about the loved one who died where each surviving family member contributes a piece. Hang the creation in the house where everyone can see it.
- **Create a shrine or a special area** that may be a shelf, a room, a corner, table top, etc. in your home, garden, office, etc. that reminds you of your loved one. It may be public for all to see or a private space for you alone.
- **Create your own grief ritual.** You may want to hold your ritual only one time or on a regular basis – daily, weekly, monthly, on special days. You can conduct your ritual alone or with others. To create your ritual you might do things like light a candle, light some incense, read or say aloud an inspirational verse, poem or prayer, chant, sing a song, ring or chime a bell, or play a particular selection of music. Clearly marking the beginning and end of a ritual will help you transition from daily life to the ritual and back again more smoothly. You may want to communicate with your loved one during this ritual either by speaking aloud, writing a letter, or meditating or praying.
- **Make a plan for anniversaries, holidays and special events.** This will help ease your worry and the worries of those around you. You might plan a special outing or visit to the cemetery; or you might plan to get together with friends or family and celebrate the life of your loved one. If the plan changes, that’s fine. However, worrying about what might or might not happen is often far worse than what actually happens. For holidays, know your limitations and be accepting of yourself in what you feel you can and cannot do. Let others help you and don’t be afraid to make changes – a different time for dinner, different place of worship, or different tradition. You might consider giving a charitable gift in memory of your loved one during a gift-giving holiday to honor their memory and help others in their name.



How to Help and Support Grieving Families

Citation: Daniel Bagby, BTRSR

Do not say or do

- Don't say "it's for the best." How do you know?
- Don't give unsolicited advice – especially on what to feel or how to feel.
- Don't remind the survivor of the deceased's faults.
- Don't say "it's all in God's plan." How do you know what God wanted or why?
- Don't avoid the survivors because you don't know what to say. If nothing else, LISTEN.
- Don't say "I'm glad she's no longer suffering" first. Let them say it first.
- Don't interrupt a survivor when they start talking about death/loss. Let them talk.
- Don't say "I know how you feel" – unless you've had the same loss.
- Don't criticize or judge.
- Don't say "it's time to get on with your life," "move on" or "get over it."

Grief takes time; it's a lifelong journey.

When a child dies, do not say or do

- Don't say "At least you have other children."
- Don't say "At least you're young; you can try again."
- Don't say "God must have needed a little angel up there."
- Don't say "Let's not question God's wisdom..."
- Don't say "At least you never knew/were never attached to the baby." (stillbirth/miscarriage)
- Don't say "Maybe the baby had something wrong with him so it's for the best."
- Don't say "please don't cry." Just sit with them or hug them while they cry. Crying is nothing more than a release of emotion.

Do say and do

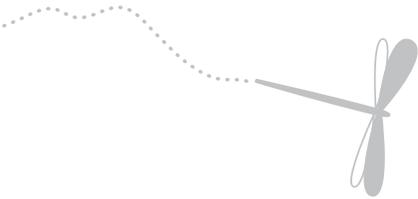
- Say "I'm sorry," "I care," "I love you" (if you do)
- Say "I'm here to listen if you want to talk."
- Tell the survivor positive things about their care, love, and the deceased.
- Share happy memories – as appropriate.
- Say "I know this must be a very difficult time for you. Is there anything you need that I can help with?"
- Say "You've been so strong and helpful for your family; if you ever need someone to be strong for you to lean on, I'm here and would be honored to try." "It's ok to let your feelings out anytime with me."
- Share your feelings of pain and loss for the deceased. This will not make the survivors feel worse. It will let them know you share their grief and that is comforting.
- Say "It's okay to be angry and frustrated – it's part of loving and totally normal."
- When they cry, say "it's okay to cry; I may cry with you."



As hard as it is to deal with the loss of someone close to you, it is affirming to be able to relate to other people and families who are going through the same thing.

*-mother from Full Circle's
Hands on Healing Group*

RESOURCES & REFERENCES



Community Bereavement Support Services

The following is a list of some of the available mental health resources in the Greater Richmond Area. Full Circle does not necessarily recommend or endorse any of the following providers.

Private Therapists / Adults

BRENDA BONNUCELLI, LCSW
106 North Thompson Street, Suite 202
Richmond, VA 23221
(804) 402-0429
mmonecounseling@gmail.com
Specializes in grief and loss and uses guided imagery and music in her practice.

LEE R. CARTER, LCSW
2200 Pump Road, Suite 220
Henrico, VA 23233
(804) 252-7953
leecarterlcsw@comcast.net
www.leecarterlcsw.com
Private counseling and psychotherapy services in the Innsbrook area for those ages 16 and older who are struggling with grief or other issues such as divorce, anxiety, and depression. Accepts most major insurance plans and many EAP's. Client is responsible for co-pay.

JILL FITZGERALD, LCSW
GRIEF RESOURCE CENTER
906 North Parham Road
Richmond, VA 23229
(804) 257-9348
jfitzgeraldgrc@gmail.com
www.jfitzgeraldgrc.com
The Grief Resource Center also offers individual and family counseling to those in need, guidance during the grieving process. Specializing in working with parents who have experienced a loss of a child (including perinatal loss), suicide survivors, sibling loss, infertility, and life-threatening illnesses. Fee for services. Appointments only. Many insurances accepted.

KAREN GILL, LCSW, CT
GILL COUNSELING AND CONSULTING
2025 East Main Street, Suite 100
Richmond, VA 23223

(804) 343-9786
gillcounseling@gmail.com
www.gillcounseling.com

KARLA HELBERT, LPC
3900 Monument Avenue, Suite F
Richmond, VA 23230
(804) 892-2782
karla@karlahelbert.com
www.karlahelbert.com
Specializes in working with children and adults on the autism spectrum.

MARK LOWEN
LAUNCH PAD COUNSELING
2008 Libbie Avenue, Suite 101
Richmond, VA 23226
(804) 665-4681
Specializing in children and adults. Fluent in German and Spanish. Registered Play Therapist.

VALERIE MITCHELL, LPC
LIVING WELL COUNSELING, LLC
1145 Gaskins Road, Suite 103
Richmond, VA 23238
(804) 277-9181
www.livingwellcounseling.org
Individual and Family Therapy

NICOLE PRIES, LCSW, CTS
LAUNCH PAD COUNSELING
2008 Libbie Avenue, Suite 101
Richmond, VA 23226
(804) 665-4681
www.launchpadcounseling.org
Specializing in helping kids and adults navigate trauma, grief, and significant life changes. Certified Trauma Specialist.

GWEN REED, LCSW
REED BLANKENSHIP
James River Psychotherapy Associates

720 Moorefield Park Drive, Suite 202
Richmond, VA 23236
(804) 272-7611
www.jamesriverpsychotherapy.com
Specializes in grief and loss and cross-cultural issues, including depression and anxiety.

KURT STIEFVATER, LPC
9044 Mann Drive at Shady Grove Road
Mechanicsville, VA 23116
(804) 920-0493
stiefvaterLPC@yahoo.com
Provides Individual and Family Therapy

MELANIE STOUDT, LPC
5318 Patterson Ave
Richmond, VA 23226
(804) 285-0001
www.dbhwestend.com
Trained in individual, family and grief therapy.

LOWELL THOMAS, LPC, LMFT
DOMINION BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE
5318 Patterson Avenue
Richmond, VA 23226
(804) 285-0001
www.dbhwestend.com
Trained in EMDR and specializes in trauma.

CAROL ZOGRAN, PhD
1503 Santa Rosa Road
Richmond, VA 23229
(804) 282-9100
Specializes in working with adults and teens. Accepts most major insurances.

Private Therapists / Children and Teens

KARLA HELBERT, LPC
3900 Monument Avenue, Suite F
Richmond, VA 23230

(804) 892-2782
karla@karlahelbert.com
www.karlahelbert.com
Specializes in working with children and adults on the autism spectrum.

HELEN HENRICH, LCSW
9044 Mann Drive
Mechanicsville, VA 23116
(804) 335-6233
www.helenhenrichlcsw.com
Tues and Sat appointments only. Trained in EMDR for those dealing with traumatic death.

BECKY JACOBSON
(804) 482-1840
mindbodyartes@gmail.com
www.mindbodyartessentials.com
*Art Therapist and Counselor
Works with children, teens, and adults in individual and group settings.*

NIKOLE JIGGETTS, LCSW, RPT
REPLAY COUNSELING CENTER
550 South Lake Boulevard
North Chesterfield, VA 23236
(804) 516-4684
www.replaycounselingcenter.com
Registered Play Therapist

DAN LACROIX, LCSW
DISCOVERY COUNSELING &
CONSULTING
4118 East Parham Road
Richmond, VA 23228
(804) 591-0002
dlacroix@vadcc.com
www.vadcc.com

MARK LOWEN
LAUNCH PAD COUNSELING
2008 Libbie Ave, Suite 101
Richmond, VA 23226
(804) 665-4681
Specializing in children and adults. Fluent in German and Spanish. Registered Play Therapist.

VALERIE MITCHELL, LPC
Living Well Counseling, LLC
1145 Gaskins Road, Suite 103
Richmond, VA 23238
(804) 277-9181
www.livingwellcounseling.org
Individual and Family Therapy

JOY MORENE, LPC
14 South Auburn Avenue
Richmond, VA 23221
(804) 767-2431

*Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor
Child, Teen, Adult, and Family Therapist*

KATHLEEN O'KEEFE, LCSW
4920 Millridge Parkway East #206
Midlothian, VA 23112
(804) 928-4632
Kathleen@kathleenokeefelcsw.com
www.kathleenokeefelcsw.com

MELODY PODRAZA, MSW, ACSW, LCSW
DOMINION BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE
703 North Courthouse Road, #101
Richmond, VA 23236
(804) 794-4482
Trained in EMDR and specializing in trauma.

NICOLE O-PRIES, LCSW, CTS
LAUNCH PAD COUNSELING
2008 Libbie Avenue, Suite 101
Richmond, VA 23226
(804) 665-4681
nicole@launchpadcounseling.com
www.launchpadcounseling.com
Specializing in helping kids and adults navigate trauma, grief and significant life changes. Certified Trauma Specialist.

KURT STIEFVATER, LPC
9044 Mann Drive at Shady Grove Road
Mechanicsville, VA 23116
(804) 920-0493
stiefvaterLPC@yahoo.com
Provides Individual and Family Therapy

DR. TOM TERRACIANO, PhD
West End Family Counseling
3932 Springfield Road
Glen Allen, VA 23060
(804) 747-8300

DR. TONY VITIELLO, PhD
8401 Patterson Avenue, Suite 102
Richmond, VA 23229
(804) 741-1177
Psychologist

TRACY WHITAKER, LCSW, RPT-S
320 Hull Street
Richmond, VA 23224
(804) 652-9315
tracywhitaker@hearttreearts.com
www.hearttreearts.com
Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor

CAROL ZOGRAN, PhD
1503 Santa Rosa Road
Richmond, VA 23229
(804) 282-9100

Specializes in working with adults and teens. Accepts most major insurances.

Counseling Agencies and Practices

CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AND
RESOURCE CENTER
1506 Willow Lawn Drive, Suite 207
Richmond, VA 23230
(804) 447-2124

CHILDSAVERS
200 North 22nd Street
Richmond, VA 23223
(804) 644-9590
www.childsavers.org
Guidance Clinic (outpatient therapy services) and Trauma Response

COMMONWEALTH CATHOLIC
CHARITIES
1512 Willow Lawn Drive
Richmond, VA 23230
(804) 285-5900
agency@cccova.org
www.cccofva.org
Individual counseling

COMMONWEALTH COUNSELING
Hickory Park Office Complex
5213 Hickory Park Drive, Suite A
Glen Allen, VA 23059
(804) 237-8030
www.commonwealthcounseling.com
*locations in Henrico, Hanover and Chesterfield
Individual counseling and evaluations*

COUNSELING ALLIANCE OF VA (CAVA)
8527 Mayland Drive, Suite 101
Richmond, VA 23294
Family and individual counseling. Sliding scale.

DOMINION BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
2305 North Parham Road #3
Richmond, VA 23226
(804) 270-1124

HEALING CONNECTIONS
Kyle McCall, LPC
8324 Bell Creek Road
Mechanicsville, VA 23116
(804) 559-7990
*Family, couple, and individual counseling.
Specializes in geriatric, anticipatory, and general grief. Accepts private pay and offers sliding scale.*

HEALTH AND FAMILY PSYCHOLOGISTS
OF VIRGINIA

Dr. Matt Bitsko, Dr. Priscilla Powel
5707 Grove Avenue
Richmond, VA 23116
(804) 562-6557
www.healthofva.com

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES

6718 Patterson Avenue
Richmond, VA 23226
(804) 282-5644
information@jfsrichmond.org
www.jfsrichmond.org

RICHMOND CREATIVE COUNSELING

1900 Byrd Avenue, Suite 200
Richmond, VA 23230
(804) 592-6311
www.richmondcreativecounseling

Mental Health and Social Services

Contact your local government funded
services (usually fees based on sliding scale):
Henrico: (804) 727-8500
Hanover: (804) 365-4200
Chesterfield: (804) 768-7200
Goochland (804) 556-5400
Powhatan (804) 598-2200
Richmond: (804) 819-4000
Central Virginia: (434) 581-3271

If not listed here, find contact information for
your local Department of Behavioral Health
and Developmental Services at:

<http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov> or dial 2-1-1
in Virginia for referrals.

Crisis Hotlines, 24 hours

| | |
|-----------------------------------------|----------------|
| Lifeline- National..... | (800) 273-TALK |
| Youth Crisis Hotline..... | (800) 448-4663 |
| First Candle/National SIDS Hotline..... | (800) 221-7437 |
| Charles City/New Kent..... | (804) 966-2496 |
| Chesterfield..... | (804) 748-6356 |
| Goochland..... | (804) 556-3716 |
| Hanover..... | (804) 365-4200 |
| Henrico..... | (804) 727-8484 |
| Powhatan..... | (804) 598-2697 |
| Richmond..... | (804) 819-4100 |

Disaster Distress Helpline..... (800) 985-5990

The nation's first permanent hotline dedicated to providing disaster crisis counseling. This free, confidential, and multi-lingual crisis support service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via phone and SMS (Text "TalkWithUs" to 66746 or for Spanish-speakers, Text "Hablanos" to 66746) for anyone experiencing psychological distress as a result of tragedy.

Full Circle Grief Center

Full Circle offers eight-week family counseling groups, youth outreach groups in the schools and local non-profit organizations, perinatal loss groups, suicide loss groups, child loss groups, and various community educational opportunities.

10611 Patterson Avenue, #201
Richmond, VA 23238
(804) 912-2947
www.fullcirclegc.org

For information about a specific program, please contact:

Executive Director:
Allyson Drake, M.Ed., CT
allyson@fullcirclegc.org

Family Hands On Healing Groups:
Stacia Macklin, LCSW
stacia@fullcirclegc.org

Outreach in Schools/Community Organizations:
Elaine Minor, M.Ed.
elaine@fullcirclegc.org

Suicide Loss Groups:
Maryse Eubank, M.Ed.
maryse@fullcirclegc.org

Educational Programs:
Elaine Minor, M.Ed.
elaine@fullcirclegc.org

Individual Consultations/Referrals:
Britt Cowart, LCSW
britt@fullcirclegc.org

Perinatal Loss Groups:
Melissa New, MSW
melissa@fullcirclegc.org

Bon Secours Specialists, Psychiatry and Neurology

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH GROUP (OUTPATIENT)

1510 North 28th Street
Medical Office Building, Suite 101
Richmond, VA 23223
(804) 371-1670
Sultan A. Lakhani, MD
Paula Allocca, RN, PhD, PMHNP
Rebecca Sherard, LCSW

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES (INPATIENT)

1500 North 28th Street
Third Floor
Richmond, VA 23223
(804) 371-1675
Bruce R. Stevens, MD

BON SECOURS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH GROUP AT ST. MARY'S (OUTPATIENT)

5855 Bremono Road
MOB North, Suite 404
Richmond, VA 23226
(804) 287-7788
Rashida Gray, MD
Durre Khan, MD
Tara A. Crisinati, MS, PMH, NP/CNS-BC

BON SECOURS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH GROUP AT ST. MARY'S (INPATIENT)

5801 Bremono Road
7 West Behavioral Health
Richmond, VA 23226
(804) 287-7836
Rashida Gray, MD
Tara A. Crisinati, MS, PMH, NP/CNS-BC

BON SECOURS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH GROUP AT MEMORIAL REGIONAL (OUTPATIENT)

8220 Meadowbridge Road
MOB I, Suite 308
Mechanicsville, VA 23116
(804) 325-8882
Alla Lerner-Brandon, MD
Sultan A. Lakhani, MD
Laurie Klatt, LCSW

Bon Secours Bereavement Center

7229 Forest Avenue
Highlands II/Building A Suite 108
Richmond, VA 23226
(804) 433-4710
bereavement@bshsi.org

STAFF CONTACTS

Drew Burcher, MA, BCC, Manager
Kristen Emerson, MSW, Grief Counselor
Gwen Reed, LCSW, Grief Counselor

Bon Secours Hospice is committed to helping families heal after the death of a loved one. Services are provided by Bon Secours Hospice staff, Master level interns and trained volunteers. Our services are open to the community as space allows. Please note that none of our programs are drop in events.

The Bereavement Center offers:

1. Bi-yearly "Service of Remembrance and Celebration" in the Spring and Fall.
2. Monthly Workshops: Tuesday Workshops meet at the Bereavement Center and provide information about common themes in particular losses and the opportunity to share with others. To register, call Trish Kush. Space is limited.
3. Eight Week Support Groups: Designed for those who experienced their loss 3 to 18 months ago. Monday and Thursday groups are based on Understanding Your Grief by Alan Wolfelt, PhD, and teach a variety of coping skills. Books and journals are provided. Register early with Gwen Reed, as groups are limited to 10 participants and fill up quickly.

Hospices

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ASERACARE HOSPICE
Bereavement Support
Father John Ayres, MA
(804) 282-4364

CRATER COMMUNITY HOSPICE
Patti Cox, Bereavement
Coordinator (804) 840-6454
3916 South Crater Road
Petersburg, VA 23805
www.cratercommunityhospice.org
Offers a variety of grief and bereavement groups at varying times and locations to include caregiver support.

ENCOMPASS HOSPICE
(804)726-2855

HOSPICE OF VIRGINIA
Bereavement Coordinator
(804) 281-0451 or 1-800-501-0451
info@americanhospice.com
www.hospiceva.com
Provides compassionate, comprehensive palliative care to persons within life-limiting illnesses who reside with our service area at no charge. Our focus is to give physical, emotional, and spiritual support to our patients and their families. We strive to maximize their comfort and autonomy, while conserving resources. We believe in the dignity of the individual, the sanctity of the family and the beauty of the human spirit. Hospice of Virginia offers bereavement education, support groups for adults, and limited one-on-one counseling as appropriate and available.

NEW CENTURY HOSPICE
(804) 353-2702 or
(877) 274-7329
Offers a variety of grief and bereavement services and support.

NOAH'S CHILDREN PEDIATRIC
Palliative and Hospice Care
Beth Smith (804) 287-7686
Noah's Children's purpose is to ensure quality of life and dignity of death for children with life-threatening illnesses, providing compassionate support to their families as they navigate this journey. Services are available in the home beginning with diagnosis through bereavement, from prenatal through newborn, infancy, childhood and adolescence.

Other Support Services

.....

BRYAN'S OASIS
Hank and Peggy Graeser
(804) 796-2021
graeserh@comcast.net
A Place of Rest and Refreshment Located in Nelson County, VA just off the Blue Ridge Parkway. Bryan's Oasis is a mountain retreat, in bed and breakfast style, hosted by Hank and Peggy Graeser, for bereaved parents and families who are otherwise emotionally healthy, not in crisis, and not physically handicapped; offered free of charge in response to the healing presence of God.

FAN FREE CLINIC
(804) 358-6343
Medical and mental health care

FORT LEE SURVIVOR
OUTREACH SERVICES
Angela Bellamy
(804) 734-6445
www.leemwr.com/survivor-outreach-services
A part of Fort Lee Army Community Service, Survivor Outreach Services (SOS) uses a holistic and multi-agency approach to provide Survivors with benefits coordination, financial counseling, and the long-term support counseling that is specific to the individual and family grief process.

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES
Rachel Mosunmade
(804) 282-5644 ext 21
*Caregiver Support Group
Meets third Friday of every month.*

LIFENET DONOR FAMILY SERVICES
(800) 847-7831 or
www.HealingTheSpirit.org
Provides support services to grieving donor families (adults and children). Families often find meaning in the midst of a tragedy when a loved one's organs and tissues are used to save or enhance the lives of others. LifeNet Health helps to honor the lives of loved ones with friends and family.

PATHLIGHT
Pam Bancroft (804) 349-6699
www.pathlight.com
End of Life Doula, Consultant, Certified

Bereavement and Grief Counselor, Certified Healing Touch Practitioner

PET LOSS COUNSELING
The Center for Human-Animal
Interaction, VCU School of Medicine
Dr. Sandra Baker
(804) 827-PAWS (7297)

IAMS Pet Loss Support
Resource Center at VCU
(800) 332-7738

VIRGINIA MENTORING PARTNERSHIP
at the Science Museum of Virginia
2500 West Broad Street , 3rd Floor
Richmond, VA 23220
(804) 828-1536
Support and links to a variety of mentoring programs in the Richmond area.

Widow/ Widower Support Groups

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MORRISSETT FUNERAL AND
CREMATION SERVICES
Mary Lou Marple (804) 275-7828
Support group for widows and widowers.

WIDOWED GRIEF GROUP
Elaine M. C. Nowinski (804) 272-7787
Belinda B. Early (804) 513-5772
Bereavement support groups for widowed men and women.

WIDOWS PERSONS SERVICES
Karen Miller (804) 350-3604
Support Group for widows and widowers.

YOUNG WIDOWS OR WIDOWERS, INC.
Tammy Smith (804) 201-5741
www.ywow.org

WIDOWED PERSONS SERVICE
OF RICHMOND
Nancy Burner (804) 270-4221
*Three Chopt Presbyterian Church group meetings
Thursdays from 2-4pm. A program of AARP/VA.*

Camps and Retreats

CAMP KESEM
UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
(804)491-6090
richmond@campkesem.org

Camp Kesem is a nationwide community, driven by passionate college students supporting children through and beyond their parent's cancer.

CAMP LIGHTHOUSE
(757) 553-3000

A two-day camp for children ages 5-16 who have experienced the death of a close family member or friend within the past two years, to provide a safe place to share grief and take the steps needed to heal. Offers an Adult Grief Camp as well.

COMFORT ZONE CAMP
Virginia Intake Coordinator
(804) 377-3430
www.comfortzonecamp.org

A weekend bereavement camp for kids age 7-17 to help them work through the loss of a parent, caregiver or sibling in an accepting, fun environment with other kids who have been through similar experiences. Camp is free of cost and offered year-round in Virginia, New Jersey, California and Massachusetts.

MIKEY'S CAMP
Bon Secours Hospice
Beth Pile (757) 737-2287

Mikey's Camp provides a supportive environment where children and teens can explore the normal process of grieving and where their self-expression is heard, valued, and honored. The camp is staffed by professional grief facilitators and trained volunteers and held each Fall in the Hampton Roads area.

Spiritual -Based Organizations

BARNABAS COUNSELING
St. Paul's Baptist Church
(804) 643-6177
www.myspbc.org

BENEDICTINE COUNSELING SERVICES
Sister Kathy Persson, OSB, LCSW
(804) 814-2793
Counseling for grief, trauma, and anxiety/depression for couples, individuals, and families.

CHRISTIAN COUNSELING
TRAINING CENTER
(804) 358-1343
3602 Floyd Avenue
Richmond, VA 23221
Biblical-based counseling

COOL SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH
Jerry and Patsi Deans (804) 402-2032
jerry.deans@comcast.net
A peer led group facilitated by two sets of parents, both of whom have lost children. The group meets on the 2nd Sunday of every month at 5:00pm at Cool Spring Baptist Church on Atlee Station Road. The group is open to new members anytime and welcomes those suffering from all types of losses. The program consists of 13 sessions spread over 13 consecutive months. There is no charge for services and you do not have to be a member of the church to join the group.

GRIEFSHARE PROGRAMS
(800) 395-5755
www.griefshare.org/findagroup
Visit website or call for a complete listing of current and upcoming groups held at local churches around Greater Richmond.

LOCAL GRIEFSHARE:
Journey of Hope Ministries
Helen Skipwith (804) 272-1947

LOCAL GRIEFSHARE:
Bethany Baptist Church
Ben Haygood (804) 276-3993
North Chesterfield
www.bethanyplace.com

RICHMOND HILL GRIEF
SUPPORT GROUPS
Sandra Gramling, Ph.D, LCP
(804) 783-7903

SISTER'S OF HOPE
Peggy Graeser (804) 796-2021
graeserh@comcast.net
Sister's of Hope is a faith based group of bereaved moms meeting monthly in a member's home. We offer care and support to each other on this hard journey in the Lord's name.

VA INSTITUTE FOR PASTORAL CARE
(804) 282-8332

Suicide Support Services

FULL CIRCLE
Maryse Eubank (804) 912-2947
www.fullcirclegc.org
Through a partnership with Bon Secours, Full Circle offers three suicide counseling groups each year. The group will meet for eight weeks, and is open to any adult grieving the loss of someone due to suicide. There will also be a concurrent children's remembrance group offered during the eight-week group.

MORRISSETT FUNERAL AND
CREMATION SERVICES
Mary Lou Marple (804) 275-7828
or Jo Carol Parkin (804) 677-5605
Ongoing Suicide Survivor Grief Support Group Meets the 4th Thursday of each month at Chippenham Hospital, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL
ILLNESS OF VIRGINIA
Survivor of Suicide Loss Support Group
www.namcentralvirginia.org
Meets 1st Thursday of each month Monument Heights Baptist Church 5716 Monument Avenue, Richmond, VA 23226 7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

CRISILINK (DC METRO AREA)
(703) 516-6771
Offers two Survivors Support Groups for individuals who have lost someone to suicide. One is a group for adults and the other is a similar support group for teens and young adults. These ongoing, monthly groups are designed to help survivors support each other through their complicated grieving process, and are co-led by mental health clinicians and peer facilitators.

SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE
1-800-273-TALK (8255)
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

HEALING AFTER SUICIDE
JOHN RANDOLPH MEDICAL CENTER
411 West Randolph Road
Hopewell, VA 23860
Mary Douglas Krout (804) 541-7787
First and third Wednesdays at 7 PM

PEER LED SUPPORT GROUP
AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR SUICIDE
PREVENTION
First Baptist Church, Pusey House
275 Park Ave
Richmond, VA 23226
Ren Bell (804) 548-6670
<http://sos/rva.wordpress.com>
Third Thursday of each month from 6:30-8:00 PM

Additional Support Groups

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DIGNITY MEMORIAL L.I.F.T
(LIVING INFORMATION FOR TODAY)
Kathleen Stull (804) 545-7255
www.dignitymemorial.com
A social support group out of Woody Funeral Home that gives widowed individuals (adults) the opportunity to socialize with others who share similar feelings and experiences. By hosting organized monthly events such as luncheons, educational seminars and day trips, members have the chance to invest emotional energy in fellowship. There are no fees or dues to participate and membership is not restricted to those who have been served by Dignity Memorial Providers.

**L.I.F.T. is for individuals who have moved beyond their initial grief and are ready to look for new beginnings at this stage of their lives.*

HOMICIDE SUPPORT GROUP
offered by: Richmond Police Department
and Full Circle
Kimberley (804) 646-3862 or
(804) 646-8749
Richmond Police Headquarters
1201 West Graham Road
Richmond, VA 23220
For adults and children who have lost a loved one from homicide. Meets every first Wednesday of the month 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM. Partners include: Richmond Police Major Crimes Division, Richmond Behavioral Health, Richmond Commonwealth Attorney's Office, and Full Circle.

Child Loss Support Services

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BLILEY'S FUNERAL HOME
INTERMENT OF ANGELS
(804) 355-3800
Through a cooperative effort among Richmond area hospitals, Bliley Funeral Home and The Catholic Diocese of Richmond, infants may be buried in Mt. Calvary Cemetery at no cost to the family. Services are generally led by a priest from the Richmond Diocese or a local pastor.

COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS
(804) 254-0588
www.compassionatefriends.org
Provides highly personal comfort, hope and support to every family experiencing a death of a son or daughter, a brother or sister, or a grandchild, and helps others better assist the grieving family. Every last Tuesday of the month, 7:15 PM, St. Matthias Episcopal Church, 11300 W Huguenot Road Midlothian, VA 23113

FULL CIRCLE'S PERINATAL LOSS GROUP
Melissa New, MSW (804) 912-2947
www.fullcirclegc.org
Full Circle offers perinatal loss counseling groups each year for parents/couples who have experienced the death of a baby due to late-stage miscarriage, stillbirth, or death due to prematurity. The closed group will meet for eight weeks, and is open to any parent grieving the loss of a baby. Group is offered free of charge.

HELPING YOU THROUGH YOUR LOSS:
HCA SUPPORT GROUP FOR BABY LOSS
(804) 281-5549
This support group is intended for parents and adult family members who are grieving the loss of a baby. This loss includes miscarriage, stillbirth, and an infant death younger than a year old. The group is free of charge and open to the community. Bereavement group is facilitated by a social worker and members will provide peer support. The social worker can assist you in deciding if this group is right for you by calling ahead of time. Participation in all sessions is encouraged, but this is a drop in group (i.e. you are not required to commit to attending every session). First Thursday of every month, 6:45-7:45 PM.

MONTHLY MISCARRIAGE SUPPORT
GROUP AT VIRGINIA WOMEN'S CENTER
Henrico Doctor's Hospital
7611 Forest Avenue, Suite 200
Richmond, VA 23229
(804) 288-4084
Meets the first Thursday of each month, offered free of charge.

MOTHERS IN SYMPATHY AND
SUPPORT (MISS)
www.facebook.com/MISSFoundationRVA
Twitter @MISS_RVA,
Offers Bereaved Parents Support Group for mothers and fathers enduring the death of a baby from any cause at any time before or after pregnancy.
Every third Monday of the month from 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM
St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
1101 Forest Avenue, Richmond, VA 23229
Contact: Karla Helbert, LPC,
karla.helbert@missfoundation.org

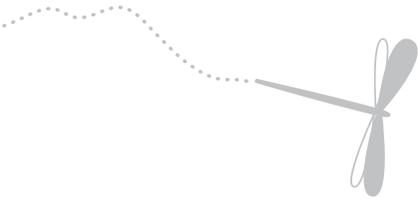
MOTHERS SUPPORTING MOTHERS
THROUGH GRIEF
Barbara Taylor (804) 828-5543

NOAH'S CHILDREN, BON SECOURS
PALLIATIVE CARE
Beth Smith, MRE (804) 513-2523
beth_smith@bshsi.org

PEACE ON EARTH BEGINS AT BIRTH
DOULA SERVICES
Jenny Stevens, Professional Doula
(804) 564-1856
Doula.PeaceOnEarth@gmail.com
www.peacefulbirth4You.com
Postpartum Support, Specializing in Traumatic Birth Experiences

RESOLVE: THE NATIONAL INFERTILITY
ASSOCIATION
www.resolve.org

SUBSEQUENT PREGNANCY AFTER LOSS
GROUP FROM MISS: RVA
Amy Mercurio, Facilitator
amy.mercurio@missfoundation.org
St. Matthew's Episcopal Church
1101 Forest Avenue
Richmond, VA 23229
Every first Tuesday of the month from 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM
If you are trying, thinking about trying or currently pregnant after a previous loss.



Online Grief and Bereavement

Citation: *The Bereavement Coalition of Central Virginia*

Child Loss

COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supports individuals who experience child loss of all kinds. Online support is limited to siblings 18 years and older.

www.compassionatefriends.org/Resources/Online_Support.aspx

MISS FOUNDATION

*Provides chats and forums for bereaved parents, siblings, grandparents and other family members. Go to **www.missfoundation.org** and click 'forums.' Browse as guests anonymously or join with an identifying screen name, sharing as much or as little as you like.*

BEREAVED PARENTS OF USA

www.bereavedparentsusa.org

HEALING HEARTS FOR BEREAVED PARENTS

Holding Out the Light of Hope and the Hand of Friendship to Grieving Parents and Their Family

www.healingheart.net

PARENTS OF MURDERED CHILDREN

Only national self-help organization dedicated solely to the aftermath and prevention of murder. POMC makes the difference through ongoing emotional support, education, prevention, advocacy, and awareness.

800-818-7662

www.pomc.org

SHARE: PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS SUPPORT, INC.

Perinatal or neonatal loss

www.nationalshare.org

General Grief

HELLO GRIEF

Provides information and resources about grief, in order to break through the current culture of avoidance that surrounds death. Hello Grief addresses bereavement head-on for those who are helping others cope, as well as those who need support on their own personal journey with grief.

www.hellogrief.org

GRIEF SHARE

GriefShare seminars and support groups are led by people who understand what you are going through and want to help. You'll gain access to valuable GriefShare resources to help you recover from your loss and look forward to rebuilding your life.

www.griefshare.org

GRIEF WATCH

Provides bereavement resources, memorial products, education, and links that can help you through your personal loss.

www.griefwatch.com

GRIEVING CENTER

A web-based television channel for those who have lost loved ones.

www.grievingcenter.org

HEALING THE SPIRIT

Resources for coping with the death of a loved one.

www.HealingTheSpirit.org

MOTHERS AGAINST DRUNK DRIVING (MADD)

National office will refer victims of drunk driving crashes to their nearest local chapter. If one is not available, telephone counselors will offer guidance and support. 1-800-GET-MADD (438-6233).

www.madd.org

AMERICAN HOSPICE FOUNDATION

www.americanhospice.org/grief-landing/

NATIONAL CHILD TRAUMATIC STRESS NETWORK (sudden loss)

www.nctsn.org

TWINLESS TWINS

Provides support for twins and other multiples who have lost their twin due to death or estrangement at any age. The unique aloneness felt can best be understood by another twinless twin.

www.twinlesstwins.org

DOUGY CENTER

www.dougy.org

SCHOLASTIC

www.scholastic.com/childrenandgrief

MODERN LOSS

A candid conversation about grief, blog for young adults.

www.ModernLoss.com

GRIEFNET

Online community providing chat groups for all losses.

www.GriefNet.org

THE SIBLING CONNECTION

Provides chats, articles, bibliography, etc. for sibling loss of all ages.

www.counselingstlouis.net

NATIONAL WIDOWERS' ORGANIZATION

A virtual toolkit for men coping with the loss of a loved one, a place where men can meet others going through the same transition.

[www. MensBereavement.org](http://www.MensBereavement.org)

Loss From Suicide

AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

www.afsp.org

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SUICIDOLOGY

www.suicidology.org

SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE

(800) 273-TALK (8255)

www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

For Children

NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR GRIEVING CHILDREN

www.childrengrieve.org

CREATIVE HEARTWORK

Organization that combines the grief process and creative expression

www.creativeheartwork.org

KIDSAID

A site for children to express their grief through art and writing

www.kidsaid.com

CHILDREN'S GRIEF AND LOSS ISSUES

Books to help children cope with loss

www.childrensgrief.net

Remembrance

FULL CIRCLE MEMORY WALL

An online memory wall to share pictures, quotes, and memories of your loved one.

www.fullcirclegc.org/memorywall

1000 MEMORIES

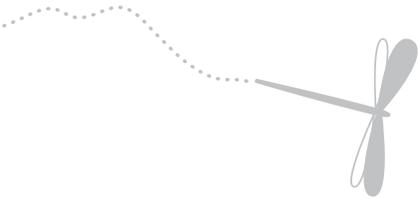
A place to record and share the story of a loved one's life.

www.1000memories.com

THE HEALING GARDEN

A child web page with interactive activities to help children deal with their grief and loss through creative expression and companion interaction.

www.healingthespirit.org/childspace.php



Book List

For Children 4-8 Years Old

When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to Understanding Death
by Laurie and Marc Brown

I Miss You: A First Look at Death
by Thomas and Harker

Badger's Parting Gifts
by Susan Varley

Where's Jess: For Children who have a Brother or Sister Die
by Marvin and Joy Johnson

The Empty Place: A Child's Guide Through Grief
by Roberta Temes

I Had a Friend Named Peter - Talking to Children About the Death of a Friend
by Janice Cohn

What's Heaven?
by Maria Shriver

Water Bugs and Dragonflies: Explaining Death to Young Children
by Doris Stickney

Don't Despair on Thursdays!: The Children's Grief-Management Book (The Emotional Impact Series)
Written by Adolph Moser
Illustrated by David Melton

The Fall of Freddie the Leaf
by Leo Buscaglia

Lifetimes: The Beautiful Way to Explain Death to Children
by Bryan Mellonie

Can you Hear Me Smiling?
by Aariane R. Jackson and Leigh Lawhon

I Found a Dead Bird: A Guide to the Cycle of Life and Death
by Jan Thorill

Part of me Died, Too: Stories of Creative Survival Among Bereaved Children and Teenagers
by Virginia Lynn Fry

The Invisible String
by Patrice Karst

What on Earth Do You Do When Someone Dies?
by Trevor Romain

When People Die
by Sarah Levete

Please Explain Anxiety to Me
by Dr. Laurie Zeringer

For Children 9-12 Years Old

Tear Soup
by Pat Schweibert

Gentle Willow: A Story for Children About Dying
by Joyce Mills

The Dragonfly Secret: A Story of Boundless Love
by Clea Adams and Barbara Gibson

The Snowman: A Book About Children and Grief
by Robert Vogel

Good Grief: A Kids Guide for Dealing with Change and Loss
by Kim Frank

Sad Isn't Bad
by Michaelene Murphy

The Magic Moth
by Virginia Lee

Healing Your Grieving Heart: For Kids
by Alan D. Wolfelt

But I Didn't Get to Say Goodbye
by Barbara Rubel

Our Dad Died: The True Story of Three Kids Whose Lives Changed
by Amy Dennison, Allie Dennison and David Dennison

For Teens

The Grieving Teen: A Guide for Teenagers and Their Friends
by Helen Fitzgerald

Straight Talk about Death for Teenagers: How to Cope with Losing Someone You Love
by Earl Grollman

You Are Not Alone: Teens Talk About Life After The Loss of a Parent
by Lynne Hughes

Healing Your Grieving Heart for Teens: 100 Practical Ideas
by Alan Wolfelt

When a Friend Dies - A Book for Teens About Grieving
by Marilyn Gootman

Losing Someone You Love: When a Brother or Sister Dies
by E. Richter

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

Understanding Your Grief: Ten Essential Touchstones for Finding Hope and Healing Your Heart

by Alan D. Wolfelt

Children and Grief: When a Parent Dies

by J. William Worden

Help Me Say Goodbye: Activities for Helping Kids Cope When a Special Person Dies

by Janis Silverman

Talking With Children About Loss

by Maria Trozzi

The Mourning Handbook: the Most Comprehensive Resource Offering Practical and Compassionate Advice on Coping with All Aspects of Death and Dying

by Helen Fitzgerald

Grief in Children: A Handbook for Adults

by Dyregrov and Yule

I'm Grieving as Fast as I can: How Young Widows and Widowers Can Cope and Heal

by Linda Feinberg

The Grieving Child: A Parent's Guide

by Helen Fitzgerald and Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

Healing the Bereaved Child: Grief Gardening, Growth Through Grief and Other Touchstones for Caregivers

by Alan D. Wolfelt

Bereaved Children and Teens: A Support Guide for Parents and Professionals

by Earl Grollman

The Grieving Garden: Living with the Death of a Child

by Suzanne Redfern

Alec's Legacy

by Frank Robinson

Finding Your Own Way to Grieve: A Creative Activity Workbook for Kids and Teens on the Autism Spectrum

by Kayla Helbert, LPC

What Do We Tell the Children?

by Dan Schaefer and Christine Lyons

Raising an Emotionally Healthy Child when a Parent is Sick

by Paula Rauch and Anna Muriel

Talking About Death: A Dialogue Between Parent and Child

by Early A. Grollman

Rare Bird

by Anna Whiston-Donaldson

The Worst Loss

by Barbara D. Rosof

I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye

by Brook Noel and Pamela D. Blair

Help Your Marriage Survive the Death of a Child

by Paul C. Rosenblatt

Gone but not Lost: Grieving the Death of a Child

by David W. Wiersbe

Grieving: Our Path back to Peace

by James R White

A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows through Loss

by Jerry Sittser

Serious Illness

How to Help Children Through a Parent's Serious Illness

by Kathleen McCue

Gentle Willow: A Story for Children about Dying

by Joyce Mills

Loss of a Child

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

Understanding Your Grief: Ten Essential Touchstones for Finding Hope and Healing Your Heart

by Alan D. Wolfelt

Children and Grief: When a Parent Dies

by J. William Worden

Help Me Say Goodbye: Activities for Helping Kids Cope When a Special Person Dies

by Janis Silverman

Talking With Children About Loss

by Maria Trozzi

Art Journals/ Workbooks

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

Understanding Your Grief: Ten Essential Touchstones for Finding Hope and Healing Your Heart

by Alan D. Wolfelt

Children and Grief: When a Parent Dies

by J. William Worden

Help Me Say Goodbye: Activities for Helping Kids Cope When a Special Person Dies

by Janis Silverman

Talking With Children About Loss

by Maria Trozzi

Pet Loss

The Tenth Good Thing about Barney

by Judith Viorst

The Forever Dog

by Bill Cochran

When a Pet Dies

by Fred Rogers

Suicide Resources

General Resources

After Suicide Loss: Coping with Your Grief
by Bob Baugher, Ph. D., and Jack Jordan, Ph. D

Black Suicide: The Tragic Reality of America's Deadliest Secret
by Alton R. Kirk, Ph. D.

Dying to Be Free: A Healing Guide for Families after Suicide
by Beverly Cobain and Jean Larch

Healing After the Suicide of a Loved One
by Ann Smolin and John Guinan

Lay My Burden Down: Unraveling Suicide and Mental Health Crisis Among African Americans.

Reaching Out After Suicide: What's Helpful and What's Not
by Linda H. Kilburn MSW

Rocky Roads: The Journeys of Families through Suicide and Grief
by Michelle Linn-Gust, Ph. D

Silent Grief: Living in the Wake of Suicide
by Christopher Lukas and Henry Seiden

Why Suicide? Questions and Answers about Suicide, Suicide Prevention and Coping with the Suicide of Someone You Know (Second Edition)
by Eric Marcus

Suicide of a Child
by Aina Wroblewski

Suicide Survivors Handbook - Expanded Edition
by Trudy Carlson

Survivors of Suicide
by Rita Robinson and Phyllis Hart

The Wilderness of Suicide Grief: Finding Your Way
by Alan D. Wolff

Touched by Suicide: Hope & Healing After Loss
by Micheal F. Myers

Unfinished Conversation: Healing from Suicide and Loss - A Guided Journey
by Robert E. Lesoine and Marilynne Chopel

Understanding Suicide and Mental Illness

An Unquiet Mind: A Memoir of Moods & Madness
by Kay Redfield Jamison

Darkness Visible
by William Styron

Demystifying Psychiatry: A Resource for Patients and Families
by Charles Zorumski and Eugene Rubin

Night Falls Fast: Understanding Suicide
by Kay Redfield Jamison

No One Saw My Pain: Why Teens Kill Themselves
by Andrew Slaby and Lili Frank Garfinkle

The Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression
by Andrew Solomon

November of the Soul: The Enigma of Suicide
by George Howe Colt

Understanding Depression: What We Know and What You Can Do About It
by J. Raymond DePaulo Jr, MD

Survivor Stories

A Force Unfamiliar to Me: A Cautionary Tale
by Jane Butler

An Empty Chair: Living in the Wake of Sibling's Suicide
by Sara Swan Miller

A Special Scar: The Experience of People Bereaved by Suicide
by Alison Wertheimer

Before Their Time: Adult Children's Experiences of Parental Suicide
by Mary and Maureen Stimming

Blue Genes: A Memoir of Loss and Survival

History of a Suicide: Me and My Sister's Unfinished Life
by Jill Bialosky

In Her Wake: A Child Psychiatrist Explores the Mystery of Her Mother's Suicide
by Nancy Rapport

My Son...My Son: A Guide to Healing After Death, Loss or Suicide
by Iris Bolton and Curtis Mitchell

Never Regret the Pain: Loving and Losing a Bipolar Spouse
by Sel Erder Yackley

No Time to Say Goodbye: Surviving the Suicide of a Loved One
by Carla Fine

Remembering Garrett: One Family's Battle with a Child's Depression
by US Senator Gordon H. Smith

Sanity & Grace: A Journey of Grief After Suicide
by Beryl Glover

The Suicide Index: Putting my Father's Death in Order
by Joan Wickersham

The Gospel According to Josh: A 28 Year Gentle Bar Mitzvah
by Josh Rivedal

Helping Children through Suicide Loss

After a Parent's Suicide: Helping Children Heal
by Margo Requarth

After a Suicide: A Workbook for Grieving Kids
available through The Dougy Center

But I Didn't Say Goodbye: For Parent's and Professionals Helping Child Suicide Survivors
by Barbara Rubel

Child Survivors of Suicide: A Guidebook for Those who Care for Them
by Rebecca Parkin and Karen Dune-Maxim

My Uncle Keith Died
by Carol Ann Loehr

Someone I Love Died by Suicide: A Story for Child Survivors and Those Who Care For Them
by Doreen Cammarata

Understanding Suicide, Supporting Children
available through The Dougy Center

For Adolescents Touched by Suicide

After
by Francis Chalifour

After a Suicide: Young People Speak Up
by Susan Kuklin

For Men

Men & Grief: A Guide for men Surviving the Death of a Loved One and a Resources for Caregivers and Mental Health Professionals
by Carol Staudacher

Men Don't Cry...Women Do: Transcending Gender Stereotypes of Grief
by Terry L Martin

Real Men Do Cry: A Quarterback's Inspiring Story of Tackling Depression and Surviving Suicide Loss
by Eric Hipple with Dr. Gloria Horsley and Dr. Heidi Horsley

Swallowed by a Snake: The Gift of the Masculine Side of Healing
by Thomas R. Golden

When a Man Faces Grief/ A Man You Know Is Grieving: 12 Practical Ideas to Help You Heal from Loss
by Thomas Golden and James Miller

When Suicide Comes Home: A Father's Diary and Comments
by Paul Cox

For Clinicians

For Clinicians Dead Reckoning: A Therapist Confronts His own Grief
by David C. Treadway

Grief After Suicide: Understanding the Consequences and Caring for the Survivors
by John R. Gordon

Suicide and It's Aftermath: Understanding and Counseling the Survivors
by Edward Dunne

Therapeutic and Legal Issues for the Therapists Who Have Survived a Client Suicide: Breaking the Silence
by Kayla Miriyam Weiner

When a Man Faces Grief/ A Man You Know Is Grieving: 12 Practical Ideas to Help You Heal from Loss
by Thomas Golden and James Miller

When Suicide Comes Home: A Father's Diary and Comments
by Paul Cox

Perinatal Loss Resources

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Empty Cradle, Broken Heart: Surviving the Death of Your Baby
by Deborah Davis

Pregnancy After a Loss
by Carol Lanham

Grieving Fathers: To The Brink and Back
by Kelly Farley

An Exact Replica of a Figment of My Imagination: A Memoir
by Elizabeth McCracken

Losing Malcolm: A Mother's Journey Through Grief
by Carol Henderson

Heaven is Real: A Little Boy's Astounding Story of his Trip to Heaven and Back
by Todd Burpo

Life Touches Life: A Mother's Story of Stillbirth and Healing
by Lorraine Ash

Still - A Collection of Artwork and Honest Writings from the Heart of a Grieving Mother
by Stephanie Page Cole

The Lovely Life - glowinthewoods.com

Free to Grieve
by Maureen Rank

Grieving the Child I Never Knew
by Kathey Wunnenburg

Life After Loss
by Bob Deits

Stillborn, The Invisible Death
by John DeFrain

Father Along: The Writing Journey of Thirteen Bereaved Mothers
by Carol Henderson

Closer to the Light
by Melvin Morse

The Still Point of the Turning World: A Mother's Story
by Emily Rapp

I Will Carry You- The Sacred Dance of Grief and Joy
by Angie Smith

To Henry in Heaven - Reflections on the Loss of a Child
by Herbert Brokering

When God Doesn't Answer Your Prayer
by Jerry Sitter

The North Face of God
by Ken Give

Dancing in the Rain
by Cindy Schuffle Banger

Through a Season of Grief
by Bill Dunn and Kathy Leonard

Gone But Not Lost: Grieving the Death of a Child
by David W. Wiersbe

Naming the Child: Hope Filled Reflections on Miscarriages, Stillbirth and Infant Death
by Jenny Shroedel

When God and Grief Meet
by Lynn Eib

Moments for Those Who Have Lost a Loved One
by Lois Monday Rabey

Surviving the loss of a Child: Support for Grieving Parents
by Elizabeth .B Brown

The Power of Memoir: How to Write Your Healing Story

by Linda Joy Myers

Pregnancy After a Loss

by Carol Cinulli Lanham

Mothering from Your Center

by Tami Lynn Kent

Celebrating Pregnancy

by Franche Cox

Baby Burps

by Amy Sprenger

Good Grief

by Monica Novak

Silent Grief

by Clara Hinton

Our Breaking Choices

by Christie Brooks

About What was Lost

by Jessica Berger Gross

Knocked Up Knocked Down

by Monica Murphy LeMoine

Life Touches

by Lorraine Ash

Shadow Child

by Beth Powning

Unspeakable Losses

by Kim Kluger Ben

Healing After Loss

by Martha Whitmore Hickman

Journeys: Stories of Pregnancy After a Loss

by Ay Abbey

To Full Term

by Darci Klein

Stolen Angels

by Shanee Moore

Fathers Feel Too

by Andrew Don

For Adults: Sudden Loss

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I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye: Surviving, Coping and Healing After the Sudden Death of a Loved One

by Brook Noel (May 1, 2008)

Also has a Workbook by the same author.

No Time for Goodbyes: Coping with Sorrow, Anger and Injustice After a Tragic Death

by Janice Harris Lord

Transforming Traumatic Grief: Six Steps to Move from Grief to Peace After the Sudden or Violent Death of a Loved One

by Courtney M. Armstrong LPC (Jul 6, 2011)

Healing Your Traumatized Heart: 100

Practical Ideas After Someone You Love Dies a Sudden, Violent Death

by Alan D. Wolfelt PhD (Sep 1, 2002)

The After Journey: Getting Through the First Year

by Laurie-Ann Weis (Jul 6, 2006)

A collection of people's thoughts and words of wisdom based on their experiences after suffering a great loss in their lives. Each section begins with the author's story and leads into the reflections of others on the same topic, some of those voices drawing tears from readers, while others conjuring sheer laughter and a sense of relief. The book is simply a friend that can hold our hand when getting through the first year alone.

Surviving Sudden Loss: Stories From Those Who Have Lived It

by Heidi Snow, Ariana Bratt and

Rudy Giuliani (Apr 3, 2012)

How To Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies

by Terese Rando (1991)

This book was written to provide information and support to help individuals cope better with loss, and supplant the unrealistic expectations about mourning that make it harder than it has to be. It addresses the specific issues faced by those who lose a spouse, child, parent, sibling, or friend and it explains the unique needs of those whose loved ones die from accident, suicide, homicide, illness, or acute natural causes.

It identifies six processes to cope with grief successfully, defining what "recovery" will and will not mean and explaining how to keep the deceased loved one appropriately "alive" in memory, as well as how to deal with the changed identity and redefined roles and relationships that major loss necessarily brings. Additionally, this book provides a wealth of information to assist children in dealing with death, and addresses funeral rituals, anniversary reactions, and practical problems brought up by death.

Coping With the Sudden Death of Your Loved One: Self-Help for Traumatic Bereavement by Terese Rando (2013)

Written for the unique needs of those whose loved ones die from accident, suicide, homicide, illness, or acute natural causes.

For Adults: Loss of a Sibling

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The Empty Room: Understanding Sibling Loss by Elizabeth DeVita-Raeburn

Drawing from her own experiences and those from interviewing 200 other individuals, this author describes the journey to healing and the unique emotions that may be present along the way.

Surviving the Death of a Sibling: Living Through Grief When an Adult Brother or Sister Dies

by T.J. Wray

This wonderful resource addresses the loss of a sibling by exploring the specific type of grief that occurs as well as giving advice for coping and healing.

Sibling Grief: Healing After the Death of a Sister or Brother

by Pleasant White, PhD.

Validation of the emotional significance of sibling loss. She draws on both clinical experience and her own deeply personal experience, along with wisdom from hundreds of bereaved siblings, to explain the five healing tasks unique to sibling grief. White also describes the dream patterns of bereaved siblings, showing how healing is

reflected in the dream state. Throughout, she illustrates the long-lasting connection between siblings—a connection that death itself cannot sever.

The Lone Twin: Understanding Twin Bereavement and Loss

by Joan Woodward

This book was written by a psychotherapist in England, who explores what happens when twins are separated, especially by death. Since twin mortality is high, it is not unusual for the surviving twin's loss to go unnoticed. The author says that the relationship between twins is highly significant and begin for many twins before they are actually born. The book is based on interviews with 219 "lone twins." Woodward is an Attachment therapist and bases her understanding of twin loss on Bowlby's theory of attachment.

An Empty Chair: Living in the Wake of a Sibling's Suicide

by Sara Swan Miller

Written following interviews with more than 30 bereaved siblings, and aided by her personal experience with her sister's suicide, the author offers hope for those left behind.

The Jim and Dan Stories: A Journey of Grief and Faith

by Colleen Redman

The author lost two adult brothers one month apart—a devastating loss that she dealt with by writing. The result is an inspiring book for those who have lost adult siblings.

Surviving the Death of a Sibling: Living Through Grief When an Adult Brother or Sister Dies

by T.J. Wray

Despite the longevity of adult sibling relationships, surviving siblings are often made to feel as if their grief is somehow unwarranted. After all, when an adult sibling dies, he or she often leaves behind parents, a spouse, and even children—all of whom suffer a more socially recognized type of loss. The book discusses: searching for and finding meaning in your sibling's passing, using a grief journal to record your emotions, choosing a grief partner to help you through tough times, dealing with insensitive remarks made by others.

Recovering From the Loss of a Sibling: When a Brother or Sister Dies

by Katherine Donnelly

A book of hope and healing that addresses

the many questions, fears and feelings of surviving siblings of all ages, such as: Will this soon happen to me? It should have been me. Why wasn't it? God must have punished me for the time when I was so mean to my brother. My sister was my parents' favorite and I don't seem to count to them. At work, they have no idea what I'm going through; they think I'm just a sibling. These intimate, true stories provide valuable insight, demonstrating that the reader is not alone and that others have gone through this devastating experience and have survived.

For Adults: Loss of a Parent

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Grieving the Death of a Mother

by Harold Ivan Smith

This book explores how the loss of the mother can impact an adult through personal anecdotes from the author and other celebrated figures, and provides insight on this specific grief process.

Midlife Orphan: Facing Life's Changes Now That Your Parents Are Gone

by Jane Brooks

This book addresses how losing a parent during midlife can uniquely impacts individuals and changes along the grieving process.

Motherless Daughters: The Legacy of Loss

by Hope Edelman

This resource addresses the unique loss of a mother from a daughter's perspective, exploring not only the initial grief, but how the loss may impact you in the years to come.

The Orphaned Adult: Understanding and Coping With Grief and Change After the Death of Our Parents

by Alexander Levy

This book addresses those who have lost their parents in adulthood, making an effort to explore that grief and not ignore it as society might want.

Losing a Parent: Passage to a New Way of Living

by Alexandra Kennedy

Most people will have to deal with the death of a parent; few are prepared to. Addressing this incomparable loss, Alexandra Kennedy shares her own compelling story and offers innovative strategies for healing and transformation. "This is an extraordinary book, beautifully written, instructive, brimming with insights into the possibilities for turning the death of a parent into a rich and transforming life event." —EastWest Magazine

Death of a Parent: Transition to a New Adult Identity

by Debra Umberson

This book sets out in clear and comprehensive terms what the death of a parent means to most adults—how it in fact functions as a turning point in our emotional, social, and personal lives. Drawing on her own groundbreaking research, in-depth interviews, and data collected nationwide, Debra Umberson explores the social and psychological factors that determine how this important loss will affect us—as a personal crisis or an opportunity for healthy change. Her book shows how adults, far from the "finished" beings we are often assumed to be, can be profoundly transformed by the death of a parent—in beliefs, behavior, goals, sense of self—transformed in ways that will continue to affect us, for better or worse, for the rest of our lives. She is the only scholar to have published on the topic of parental death in adulthood using national data.

She Loved Me, She Loved Me Not: Adult Parent Loss after a Conflicted Relationship

by Linda J Converse

Anger, rage, ambivalence, guilt and shame, relief...all of these unexpected feelings can accompany grief and sadness when a parent dies. Such reactions, however, are often considered unacceptable in our society. After reading this sensitive and thoughtful book, you will no longer feel alone.

Forgiving Our Parents, Forgiving Ourselves: Healing Adult Children of Dysfunctional Families

by David A. Stoop

Drs. Stoop and Masteller believe you can move beyond failure to forgiveness. But before you can begin the process of forgiveness, you need to understand the roots of your pain, through exploring the family patterns that perpetuate dysfunction. When you understand your family of origin, you will be able to take the essential step of forgiveness.

Midlife Orphan

by Jane Brooks

The word “orphan” may make us think of a child—but even self-sufficient adults can feel the pain of “orphanhood” when their parents are suddenly gone. Complicating the natural mourning process is the fact that this loss often occurs in our thirties, forties, or fifties—as we are raising our own children, watching them leave the nest, and facing other adjustments in our lives, from our jobs to our marriages to our health.

Fatherloss: How Sons of All Ages Come to Terms with the Death of their Dad

by Neil Chethik

Features up-close-and-personal profiles of father-son relationships, drawing on the author’s national survey of 300 men and interviews with 70 others. Grieving is part of the unique relationship between sons and fathers; it is highly subjective and dependent on the son’s age at the time of his father’s death.

On Love Alone: Words to Heal on the Death of a Father

by Jonathon Lazear

This book is the tranquil place you’ve been looking for. It is a heartfelt collection of quotes, poems, and passages.

Losing Your Parents, Finding Yourself: The Defining Turning Point of Adult Life

by Victoria Secunda

Drawing on her survey of 94 people, Secunda explores how adult orphans gradually give up their old childish identity and discover their true adult selves in terms of their relationships with siblings, children, and friends.

In the Letting Go: Words to Heal the Heart on the Death of a Mother

by Jonathon Lazear

When a mother dies, often the center of the family is gone. The holiday rituals, the special birthday celebrations for children and grandchildren—the memories are often held by the mother. A mother is a caretaker, a best friend, a source of sage-like wisdom. Losing her can be a traumatic experience. It is a space where you are invited to discover solace through the experiences and feelings of others—simple or profound.

When Parents Die: A Guide for Adults

by Edward Myers

He discusses the psychological responses to a parent’s death, such as shock, depression, and guilt, and offers suggestions on how to

cope with and overcome these responses.

Practical matters, such as dealing with funerals and estates are also discussed, and a resource guide offers information on support groups, counseling, and additional reading. Enriched by the voices of bereavement experts, clinicians, and individual men and women who have suffered the loss of a parent. When Parents Die will lead the grieving toward insight, growth, solace, and acceptance.

Death Benefits: How Losing a Parent Can Change an Adult’s Life—For the Better

by Jeanne Safer Ph.D.

Demonstrates through powerful stories (including the author’s own revelatory experience) how parent loss is the most potent catalyst for change in middle age and can actually offer us our last, best chance to become our truest, deepest selves.

Helping Grieving Children

Books to Help Children Cope with Separation and Loss

by Joanne E Bernstein and R. R. Bowker

A bibliographic guide to fiction and nonfiction books designed to help children from age 3 to 16 during grief.

Living with Death

by Judith Bisignano

This is a workbook. Adults must play a significant role in assisting children to understand and accept their feelings. Ages 11 to adult.

Healing Children’s Grief: Surviving a Parent’s Death from Cancer

by Grace Hyslop Christ

Children Mourning, Mourning Children

by Kenneth Doka Ph.D. Ed.

The Magical Thoughts of Grieving Children: Treating Children with Complicated Mourning and Advice for Parents

by James A. Fogarty

Explaining Death to Children

by Earl A. Grollman

A collection of articles on the title subject. Young child’s view of death as seen in different cultures. Also the Protestant, Catholic and Jewish approach with children.

Helping Children Grieve

by Theresa Huntley

To help adults understand how children grieve and how to help.

Telling a Child about Death

by Edgar Jackson

A reference book for adults in how to present information about death to a child.

Where Has Grandpa Gone?

by Ruth Kopp M.S.

Excellent book for parents in understanding what a child grasps at various age levels.

How Do We Tell The Children?

by Dan Schaefer

Provides the straightforward, uncomplicated language that will explain the facts of death to children from two to teenagers.

Helping Children Cope with Grief

by Alan D. Wolfelt

Excellent reference work designed for those who want to be “helping-healing adults” to children coping with grief experiences.

Healing a Teen’s Grieving Heart: 100 Practical Ideas

by Alan D. Wolfelt

Healing the Bereaved Child

by Alan D. Wolfelt

Spousal Loss

Finding Your Way After Your Spouse Dies

by Marta Felber

This Christian resource encourages adults to really explore their grief through prayer, journaling, and reading as the author offers help navigating their grief journey.

Getting to the Other Side of Grief: Overcoming the Loss of a Spouse

by Robert De Vries

A Christian resource, written by a

psychologist/pastor team, this book outlines the grieving process and addresses why it is so vital to undertake the journey through grief.

Healing a Spouse's Grieving Heart: 100 Practical Ideas After Your Husband or Wife Dies

by Alan Wolfelt

Written for widowed individuals regardless of age, circumstances, or length of time after death, this book addresses grieving and the impact that it can have as you try to continue after the death.

Widow to Widow: Thoughtful, Practical Ideas for Rebuilding Your Life

by Genevieve Davis Ginsburg

This resource addresses not only the emotions that often accompany a newly bereaved widow, but also many of the practical issues that may arise, such as learning to travel and eat alone.

Swallowed by a Snake

by Tom Golden

Discover new and powerful ways to heal, how the genders differ in their healing, greater understanding between partners, examples of successful and unique healing strategies, new ways to understand your grief, and ways the individual's loss can impact the entire family.

Levels of Life

by Julian Barnes

The winner of the 2011 Man Booker Prize offers a rumination on grief and the alchemical power of love after the shattering loss of his wife.

Loss of an Adult Child

When Your Family's Lost a Loved One

by David and Nancy Guthrie

While many marriages and families falter under the load of grief that losing a child brings, these authors have not only stayed together but have grown closer. "It breaks my heart to think of couples who not only lose their child but also lose the one person who connects them most closely to that child." The death of a child does not spell the certain death of a marriage. It can actually draw a family closer.

The Bereaved Parent

by Harriet Sarnoff Schiff

Addressing not only the initial grief that a parent may feel, this book also discusses how grief may evolve over the coming year and offers guidance through the day-to-day issues that may arise.

When the Bough Breaks: Forever After the Death of a Son or Daughter

by Judith Bernstein

This resource combines Bernstein's work with interviews from 55 parents that had lost children from 5 to 45, creating a book that addresses the intense grief a parent may feel as well as how such a loss may impact all members of a family.

Healing the Heartbreak of Grief

by Dr Peter James Flamming

A locally notable pastor emeritus shares his thoughts on the struggle of grief, from his personal experience of an adult child's death, and from providing pastoral care to many.

Farther Along: The Writing Journey of Thirteen Bereaved Mothers

by Carol Henderson

The Death of an Adult Child: A Book for and About Bereaved Parents (Death, Value and Meaning)

by Jeanne Webster Blank

Angel Catcher: A Journal of Loss and Remembrance

by Kathy Eldon and Amy Eldon Turteltaub

Written by a bereaved mom and her daughter.

General Grief

Tear Soup

by Pat Schweibert

One of the best and most popular grief resources available. Although it looks and reads like a fairy tale, or child's fable, it is actually most informative about grief for adults as well as children.

Experiencing Grief

by H. Norman Wright

This resource explores the five stages of grief and the tumult of emotions that emerge, such as guilt, from a Christian perspective.

Healing After Loss: Daily Meditations for Working Through Grief

by Martha Hickman

By delivering insight through short, one-page entries, this wonderful resource manages to not only cover a span of emotions and reactions in grief, but also to fit into the chaotic lives of grievers. Excellent.

How to Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies

by Therese Rando

This resource is a wealth of knowledge, beginning by teaching about grief itself then applying it to specific experiences and teaching about the resolution of it.

I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye: Surviving, Coping and Healing After the Sudden Death of a Loved One

by Brooke Noel and Pamela Blair

Though much of the book centers on the experience of losing a loved one suddenly, the authors also explore the first few weeks after a death, myths about grieving and gender based grieving styles.

On Grief and Grieving: Finding the Meaning of Grief Through the Five Stages of Loss

by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

This book breaks down common emotional stages that many adults may feel as they grieve and addresses a variety of situations that may lead to complicated grief.

Through a Season of Grief: Devotions for Your Journey from Mourning to Joy

by Bill Dunn & Kathy Leonard

A collection of 365 daily devotions, this Christian resource helps individuals move from initial loss through their grief in the year that follows to a place of healing.

Traveling Through Grief: Learning to Live Again After the Death of a Loved One

by Susan Zonnebelt-Smeenge and Robert DeVries

This resource examines each of five common tasks of grief with both a Christian and mental health perspective – accepting the reality of death, embracing all the following emotions, keeping memories, separating yourself from the deceased, and reinvesting fully in your life.

When a Man Faces Grief / A Man You Know is Grieving

by Thomas Golden & James Miller

This resource is divided into two sections, each with twelve chapters. The first addresses men that are grieving directly to give helpful ideas to work through grief and the other that

addresses loved ones who want to understand and help men who are grieving.

When There Are No Words: Finding Your Way to Cope with Loss and Grief

by Charlie Walton

This is a heartfelt book written for a grieving adult and it includes a helpful list of resources and organizations at the back of the book.

Swallowed by a Snake: The Gift of the Masculine Side of Healing

by Thomas R. Golden

A book for men and women about the masculine side of healing from loss. Discover how the genders differ in their healing and create greater understanding between partners. Learn by examples of others' successful and unique grief journeys. Discover ways that your loss can impact the entire family. Swallowed by a Snake is meant to be a map and a guide through the experience of loss. It will help you move through the pain of loss and into a place of healing and transformation.

A Grief Observed

by C.S. Lewis

The author's heavy spiritual journey through grief following his wife's death. A comforting, important book, highly recommended.

To Begin Again

by Rabbi Naomi Levy

She shares a deep and compassionate understanding of grief that is useful for those of any spiritual belief. Levy realizes that the question after a personal tragedy should not be, "Why did this happen?" but rather, "How can I go on?"

A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows through Loss

by Jerry Sittser

In coming to the end of ourselves, we can come to the beginning of a new life—one marked by spiritual depth, joy, compassion, and a deeper appreciation of simple blessing.

Ambiguous Loss: Learning to Live with Unresolved Grief

by Pauline Boss

Drawing on her research and clinical experience, Boss suggests strategies that can cushion the pain and help families come to terms with their grief. These losses may be life altering and traumatic (having a spouse with Alzheimer's disease, immigration loss, spouses missing in action) yet are often not

recognized as real losses. There are no rituals to mark them, no wakes, funerals, sympathy cards or meals by neighbors. Without the validation the people often feel frozen in limbo, unsure how to navigate lives that no longer felt familiar. The central message of this book is that they can move on.

The Infinite Thread: Healing Relationships Beyond Loss

by Alexandra Kennedy

The loss of someone close to us can shake the very foundations of our lives. We look for ways to rebuild that foundation but our society has little to offer. We hear cliches such as time heals all wounds and you just need to get on with your life. But too often such advice deepens the pain and turmoil we feel. Thankfully, there are alternatives that really can bring us comfort. She tells how to use our own innate abilities for finding the path through the bewildering experience of loss. From writing letters to creating a sanctuary for the process of recovery, she tells how our creative and intuitive capacities can help us find peace beyond the inner turmoil. Using anecdotes from real-life, she eloquently describes the seven tasks of grieving and offers ways to support partners, friends, and children who are struggling with loss.

Healing Complicated Grief: Reflections and Exercises to Mourn the Loss of Those Who Loved and Hurt Us

by Cheryl Kroll

Through a series of sensitively written reflections and innovative exercises, Cheryl will walk you through the authentic grief process, helping you to resolve past hurts, heal present losses, and once again embrace the future with hope and joy.

No Time for Goodbyes: Coping with Sorrow, Anger and Injustice After a Tragic Death
by Janice Harris Lord

Perfection: A Memoir of Betrayal and Renewal
by Julie Metz

One woman's story of finding out, after his sudden death, that her husband had had numerous affairs. Two of the affairs were with close friends of the couple. The book is gripping.

Better Than My Dreams: Finding What You Long For Where You Might Not Think to Look
by Paula Rinehart

Every morning we face the day with a set of expectations about how things will or should be. Author Paula Rinehart says, "The oddest part about our mental images is that we don't know they are there until the video of our lives plays out in a different fashion." Offering a radical shift in perspective, Paula guides readers to a fresh discovery that the story of our lives may look vastly different than what we anticipated—but that it's a good thing.

Disenfranchised Grief

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Disenfranchised Grief: Recognizing Hidden Sorrow

by Kenneth J. Doka

Author coined this term to mean grief that people experience when they have a loss that is not or cannot be openly acknowledged, socially sanctioned or publicly mourned, like a death to AIDS or of an ex-spouse.



How to Help a Grieving Family

By Anna Whiston Donaldson

An author and blogger who lost her twelve year old son Jack in neighborhood accident

Thousands of other people are teaching me how to love someone through grief. You see, I realize now I have NEVER been good at reaching out to those who were grieving. I made a lot of excuses such as, "I don't want to intrude", "We're not that close," "I'm sure plenty of other people are doing it," and "I don't want to make them any sadder than they already are." A lot of times I think I just chose my agenda versus reaching out, and I missed many opportunities to walk beside grieving families.

We are truly amazed by the outpouring of love we have received upon losing Jack, and we hope some of these suggestions could help us all know how to "love on" another family in need.

1. PRAY. PRAY. PRAY.

2. Attend the Funeral. To attend funerals people must travel, skip work or school, arrange childcare, and figure out parking and directions. Funerals are inconvenient. The bereaved family knows this and will be blessed and lifted when people extend themselves to be there. Do not worry if you were not close to the deceased, or have been out of touch with the family for many years. Attend anyway. A funeral is a communal event; you will not be intruding. You never know if your presence, or even a glimpse of you or a hug from you will be THE ONE that provides the most comfort.

3. Cook. Have a point person arrange meal sign-up via a website such as Take Them A Meal or Sign Up Genius. Consider making a meal and freezing it in your own freezer for when the other meals stop coming. A small family will appreciate smaller meals so they don't feel they are wasting food. We were so grateful to have meals provided for us for almost 4 months!

4. Send a card or a handwritten note. If possible, include a personal story about the the person who died. Even the smallest anecdote is welcome. These are treasured by the family and read over and over. One friend reminded me in a card that one of Jack's first words was "Azalea." How cool is that? If you are not able to share a personal story, don't worry. A simple, "I am so very sorry for your loss" or "My heart is breaking for you" will help. When you write your letter, consider going ahead and addressing another envelope to send 3, 6, or 9 months out. The envelope will help you remember to pray for the family, and your next letter will come when most people have stopped sending cards.

5. Send flowers to the home or church; however, you may want to consider sending flowers to the home a month or two after the death so that they will not overwhelm the family. Seeing the house full of flowers, that would eventually die, was hard for me.

6. Come by to show your support. When Jack was missing, close friends and family just showed up. They stayed with us until we found out the horrible news of his death. Several sat in the dark at my kitchen table until after midnight to be there when my sister arrived. They all had other things they could have been doing that rainy night, but they showed up. In the days following a death, a family should have a point person who feels comfortable telling people whether or not it's a good time to visit, because immediate family members may be too shocked and confused to be able to communicate this. When you drop by, be prepared for a quick hug and then to be on your way, but be flexible. If the bereaved family asks you to stay, be open to that, too. Men, don't be shy about coming by. Tim appreciated men dropping by just for him.

7. If you are a close family friend, consider taking any children out for an activity to give them a break from the home atmosphere. Kids need chances to feel "normal" in the midst of grief.

8. Give the family pet some attention. Our neighbor walked Shadow several times a day and even kept her overnight during those first crazy days.

9. Consider the physical needs of the home. Working in the yard could make a family feel too exposed or vulnerable so soon after a death. One friend mowed our grass for us. He didn't know that Jack was the grass mower in our house and that it would be so painful for us to do it ourselves, but he just thought it would be helpful and showed up. Another family raked our leaves. One friend, after asking if it was okay, came by and planted 100 tulip bulbs in our yard while I was at work! Mulching, powerwashing, or cleaning someone's gutters could be other outside jobs a grieving family might not feel able to tackle. You can include your kids in some of these tasks. I remember Tim taking Jack to spread mulch at a newly widowed friend's house and it was a meaningful experience for them both.

10. Drop a gift in the mail. We received grief books, devotionals, inspirational Cd's, fruit, sweets and more in the mail. Every day of the week I now wear special, meaningful jewelry that represents Jack and

was sent to me by people all over the world. These touching gifts took time and effort and are so special to us. Margaret has received small gifts and even a care package from France! Consider mailing a gift card to a restaurant or the movies for a family to use later when they feel up to it. Sometimes a gift card provides the motivation to get out of the house.

11. Make a contribution to charity in the name of the deceased.

Consider writing it on your calendar now to do annually so the family will know you have not forgotten. These donations help a family see that something positive can come out of their loss. If you feel led, spearhead a scholarship or a charitable event in the person's name.

12. Mention the deceased person's name when you see the family. It's hard. Do it anyway. The family will cry. Do it anyway.

13. Invite a family member out for coffee, a meal, a walk, or a sporting event. One on one time with a friend, sharing the story and processing it, is a valuable form of therapy. Don't worry if they say no; sometimes they are not ready, or they may need to spend time with someone else right now. Ask anyway.

14. Use texting, email, blogging or Facebook to reach out to the family.

You can do this anytime of day or night. I have one friend, whom I did not know very well before the accident, who is committed to praying for us and sending us messages when her baby gets her up at night, which is often. Don't worry about saying the same thing again and again. Your friends are not looking for words of wisdom, just the reminder that you are there.

15. Do not feel offended if your phone calls go unreturned. Just leave a loving message. I have found returning phone calls, or even picking up the phone, to be daunting and difficult, but I still appreciate hearing messages.

16. Send photos or videos of the deceased. Even if you think family members might already have photos from an event, send whatever you have. A new facial expression or a different angle provides them with another glimpse of the one who is gone. The photos on today's post were sent to me by a reader I've never met who realized Jack was in the background of some of her photos from the LEGO store in 2010!

17. Use your special talents to show your love. A poem. A knitted prayer shawl or blanket. A painting. Handcrafted jewelry. We have been stunned by the way people have shared their talents by making us gifts from the heart.

18. Get creative! You have heard how our community tied royal blue bows around trees and mailboxes so that we would feel loved when we drove around town. Then our blogging friends tied ribbons at their homes around the world, and even put them on their Christmas trees. Now, we have made blue ribbon magnets with Jack's Bible verse on them for our cars. Who knew how the simple act of tying a ribbon could bring us so much comfort? Maybe there is a special color associated with the deceased, or a symbol (dove, butterfly, rainbow) that reminds you of him or her. For Jack, friends and neighbors made LEGO crosses to wear at the funeral. These incorporated 2 of Jack's greatest loves! Maybe YOUR idea or kind gesture will be the one that will most resonate with the family, whether it is tying bows, lining their driveway with luminaria, setting up a Facebook memory page, having a card signed by a Sunday School class,

or organizing a tribute such as a balloon release. If you are feeling led to commemorate the deceased in such a way, it could be a big blessing to the family.

19. Even if you didn't know the deceased, consider sharing what the deceased means to you NOW. Eternal life is, well, ETERNAL. Jack's life is affecting people in ways we could never imagined, and we are blessed that so many people are making the effort to let us know, through emails, blog comments, letters, or person. This helps ease the sting. Have you had a dream about the person who passed away? Tell the family.

20. You may want to drop by during the day, or at work. While this not be appropriate for some people, because of their job settings, it has been nice to me to be surprised by friends bearing smoothies, hugs, or a cup of tea at my tear-friendly workplace.

21. REMEMBER. Take note of the season, the day of the month, the day of the week, even the time of day that the deceased person left us. Reach out at these times as you feel led-- through a quick email, text, or note.

22. Write the person's birthday and death day on your calendar. Send a note or an email on those days.

23. Memorialize the loved one by planting a tree, erecting a cross, making a stepping stone, donating a book to an elementary school, starting a scholarship, or installing a bench.

24. Visit the cemetery. I have only been to Jack's cemetery 2 times, but I know others have gone FOR me. Maybe a face to face at visit at the family's home isn't your thing, but saying a prayer in the quiet of a cemetery is.

25. Follow promptings. If you feel a prompting to reach out, it could very well mean that the family needs your support. Do not get bogged down thinking about how close you were or weren't before the death. A reality of death is that relationships change during difficult times. The grieving person may not have the support you think they do. YOU may be the one who can best relate, or listen, or connect with a hurting person. It may feel awkward at first, but it's worth it. I think of how blog readers have felt prompted to write to me, share their own experiences, and offer prayer. If they had gotten bogged down about our not knowing each other "in real life," they would never have reached out.

Okay, so this is a VERY long list, and if it weren't after midnight, it would probably grow longer. I hope it doesn't sound entitled, or like I think other people should take care of every aspect of our family's life, just because we lost Jack. These are just some of the incredible ways people have reached out to us, and I hope by sharing them others can be helped similarly. Of course, NO ONE can do all of these things. But someone did do EACH of these things. And more. **Love is a verb.**

See more at: <http://aninchofgray.blogspot.com/2012/03/what-you-can-do-to-help-grieving-family.html#sthash.OXzB3Lpa.dpuf>

Affirmations and Aspirations

You can shed tears that she is gone,

or you can smile because she has lived.

You can close your eyes and pray that she'll come back, or you can open your eyes and see all she's left.

Your heart can be empty because you can't see her,

or you can be full of the love you shared.

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday, or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday. You can remember her only that she is gone,

or you can cherish her memory and let it live on.

You can cry and close your mind,

be empty and turn your back.

Or you can do what she'd want:

smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

David Harkins

Healing from grief is the process of
**remembering with
less pain and more joy**

Author Unknown

*I learned that
it's okay to cry.*

*-girl in Full Circle's
Outreach Group*





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