

Grief





Helpful Tips

- Explanations must be simple
- Students need to talk, not just be talked to
- It is not the expression but the suppression of feeling that is most harmful
- Trust and Truth are the greatest needs during this time



Things we shouldn't say

- She/He wouldn't want you to be sad.
- This will make you stronger.
- They are in a better place.
- I know how you feel.
- God needed your friend.



Not Helpful/More Helpful

It's time to put this behind you.	This might take time.
It could be worse.	You have a lot on your plate.
I know what that's like.	Do you mind telling me what it's like?
Keep the faith.	I'm thinking of you every day.



Young Children

- Need the loving guidance of adults to navigate loss
- For children age six to nine, the permanence of death can be difficult to understand. If they ask questions you don't know the answer to, it's okay to say, "I don't know."
- For children age nine to twelve, they have a much better understanding of death, so honesty is incredibly important when speaking to them. **Also, your presence is more important than anything you say.**



Common myths

- A child's grief is a much shorter duration than an adult's grief.
- There is a predictable and orderly stage-like progression to a child's grief experiences.
- Children are not affected by the grief of the adults around them.
- The goal in helping grieving children is to "get them over" their grief.



Suggestions for parents

- Encourage your child to tell you how they feel about the death, what they think, and what they know.
- Attempt to answer your child's questions in the spirit they were asked.
- Keep your voice calm
- Be present
- Be honest
- Give your child the right not to share if they don't want to
- Listen! Your child needs to talk more than being talked to



Adolescents

- Most deaths that adolescents experience are sudden or untimely
- Many will react with feelings of disbelief and numbness



What to Do

- Initiate the discussion of the loss.
- Trust your instincts for knowing the right thing to do and say. There is no perfect script.
- Give an opportunity to do something constructive for the deceased's family.
- Communicate the knowledge that all feelings are okay and need to be appropriately expressed.
- Remember what is in your heart is more important than what is in your head when helping your grieving child.



Points to remember

- Make every effort to enter your child's world and get a glimpse of their perspectives
- Don't minimize their loss
- Communicate that we don't move on from hard losses
- Reassure them that this person won't be forgotten
- If you don't know the answer to a question, respond with "I don't know"



Navigating Grief & Loss Handouts

For School Counselors:

https://grievingstudents.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Supporting-Our-Students_Final-For-Distribution_1.pdf

For Teachers/Staff:

https://www.dougy.org/assets/uploads/TDC_Tips_for_Teachers_School_Personnel_2018.pdf

For Parents:

<https://www.lansingburgh.org/cms/lib/NY50000179/Centricity/Domain/1125/10%20Ways%20to%20Help%20a%20Grieving%20Child.pdf>