

Helping Children Grieve: When Someone They Love Dies **Grief Centre for Children & Youth – Ottawa Carleton**

When someone close to us dies, the world as we know it is shattered.

Sometimes it is difficult to understand or express our powerful feeling. We may see ourselves as being weird, different or alone. Our behaviors and actions may change as we struggle to understand our loss.

We may react in many ways. Part of the process of grief may include wishing for the person who has died to come back, or worrying when someone is late or away; also, lack of concentration, poor school work and attendance, changes in sleeping and eating, and fears of common illness.

“Why do I feel so empty?”

Sometimes we try too hard to control our feelings. This is especially true with pain. It is normal to long for the return of someone you love, and to feel sad, angry, and even to cry. These are all painful emotions. Other people can help you to ease the pain. Seek out a sensitive friend, a parent, a sympathetic teacher, a counselor, a group of people who have experiences these feelings.

“Suddenly my parents expect me to parent them. I just can’t handle it.”

This is truly one of the most unfair positions your grief puts you in., try to share these feelings with your parents. Hopefully you will be better able to understand one another.

“I can’t remember exactly how he looks. Does this mean I’m forgetting him?”

No, even if your father were alive you wouldn’t be able to recall everything about him. It is natural to forget some details, but many gestures and memories will be in your heart forever.

“I’m so tired of trying to make it through every day. I smile on the outside but inside I scream! I’m still not over her death—but everyone expects me to be. Is there something wrong with me?”

No. your sister was close to you and her dying hurts. Probably no one but another bereaved person can fully understand what you’re feeling.

“I feel my friends avoid me. This hurts.”

Your life has changed and you know this even if your friends may not be able to understand this. They may feel helpless to help you and so they avoid trying. It is impossible not to feel hurt and angry. It is helpful for you to remember that it is not you they reject, but your situation which troubles them.