



GRIEF SERVICES

Understanding Grief Reactions of: Teens

How they think:

- They are learning how to cope with death because they understand the finality of death now
- They may not want to talk about it because they are UNSURE
- They are developing socially and becoming more aware of others and their sufferings and feel responsible
- They fear being different from others

How they feel: Vulnerable and anxious, afraid to talk about it

How they may behave:

- Fearful – afraid they will not “fit in” anymore
- Withdrawn or more aggressive – due to insecurity
- Lack of concentration – grades may decline
- Anxious and closed – cannot talk about death
- Confused and guilty – feelings cause conflict inside them

What they need from you:

- T - TALK** Listen, listen, and listen
Allow them to talk to and receive support from friends
Tell them how you feel and ask them to share also
- E - ENCOURAGE** Provide encouragement to talk about their concerns
Acknowledge the new changes in the family
Discuss the difficulty of those changes for them
Ask how you can help them cope
- E - EFFECTS** Acknowledge the effects of this on their life
Accept the effect of their resistance to the changes
Accept their feelings and validate their difficulties
- N - NORMALIZE** Help them maintain a “normal” teenager’s life
Help them find healthy outlets for coping, i.e. sports
Know that they are conflicted and feel guilty
- S - SUPPORT** Support and value their role as a teenager in the family
Be open to hearing about their challenges