



Information for Teens about Coping with Loss and Grief

What Is Grief

Grief is the term used for the many feelings and behaviors we experience when we are faced with loss. The loss may be from the death of a significant other, relocation, or divorce. Grief is a natural and normal reaction to loss and change. Teens do experience grief as they have feelings and are aware of losses. However, everyone experiences grief differently.

What Are Some of the Feelings I May Have

You may have 1 or more of these feelings: abandonment or the feeling of being left alone, anxiety, confusion, anger, guilt, fear, body distress, rejection, sadness, and panic. It is important to try to identify, name, and talk about these different feelings with your parent, a health professional, or counselor.

Some Teens Who Are Grieving May Notice Some of These Behaviors

Temper outbursts, panic attacks, regression or less mature behavior, disinterest in usual activities, increased dependency on adults, stomachaches and headaches, silence, or trying to be "the perfect child," withdrawal, taking on adult activities, over-activity. If you notice any of these changes in your behavior, again, share this with your parent, a health professional, or counselor.

What Is the Difference between Grief and Depression

The symptoms of depression and grief are similar. If you have any concerns about how you are adjusting to your loss or wondering if you are depressed.....TALK TO SOMEONE! People that can help you are nurses, doctors, nurse practitioners, school counselors, and psychologists.

How do Teens Grieve Differently than Adults

Adults often feel sad over an extended period of time, whereas a teen's grief tends to come and go. Your expression of grief may flare up and then be over quickly as you move on to the next activity. This "rollercoaster" feeling, though different from that experienced by adults and possibly uncomfortable for adults, is a normal grief pattern for teens.