

## SOME GUIDELINES

1. Accept your emotions as normal and deal with them.
2. Express your feelings and accept help and support.
3. Don't expect miracles overnight, grieving takes time.
4. Escaping into loneliness is the wrong solution. Seek help when you need it.
5. Friends are important.
6. Counselling may be helpful.
7. Be kind to yourself.
8. Understanding grief and accepting your loss can help you recover and grow to be a stronger person.
9. You are not going crazy! Your feelings are valid and likely normal. It is only through change that we grow.
10. Sources of help and information:
  - Counselling
  - Bereavement groups
  - Support groups
  - Mental Health Association
  - Child and Family Services

## REFERENCES

O'Toole (1995) *Facing Change: Falling Apart and Coming Together Again in the Teen Years.*

Traisman, Enid Samuel. *Fire in My Heart, Ice in My Veins: A Journal for Teenagers Experiencing a Loss.*



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# GRIEVING TEENS A FEW THOUGHTS FOR YOUR JOURNEY

hopelessness • anger • loneliness  
guilt • depression



*“Adolescence is the vast never-never land in which you exist while wondering who and what you are... You are too old to be treated like a child, and too young to be treated as an adult. It is a dream world and sometimes that dream is a nightmare.”*

One cause of adolescent nightmares is the personal crisis brought on by the loss of a significant relationship.

This loss can occur because of an unresolved family breakdown, moving, serious illness, or death of a family member or close friend. Having to cope with a loss adds to the normal turbulence of adolescence and may lead to an increase in stress-related problems and behaviors.

## GRIEVING PEOPLE SHARE CERTAIN FEELINGS

### 1. Shock and Denial

Your first reaction may be to deny your loss or to feel emotionally numb. Eventually, you'll be able to face the reality of your loss.

### 2. Anger

Your loss may seem unfair. You may feel angry with yourself and others for not preventing the loss, but you can work through your anger.

### 3. Guilt

It's not unusual to blame yourself for something you did or didn't do prior to your loss. Remember, you are only human - there are events you just can't control.

### 4. Depression

You may feel drained and unable to perform even routine tasks. Eventually, you will become involved in life again.

### 5. Loneliness

Increased responsibilities and changes in your life can make you feel lonely and afraid. As you meet new challenges and develop new friendships, these feelings will fade.

### 6. Hope

You will reach a stage where you can focus on your future filled with hope. No matter how difficult life may get, you can pull through!

## HELP THE GRIEVING PROCESS

It is important to remember that grief is a natural human response to loss. It is not an illness that needs treatment.

Since life involves many gains and losses, learning to handle grief effectively is a necessary life skill.

**It is as important for you to learn how to handle grief as it is for you to learn how to do math or to drive a car!**

## WAYS OF COPING

- Remember “YOU ARE NOT ALONE” or different from your peers
- Get information to help make sense of both death-related experiences and experiences of grief and mourning
- Talk to someone that you trust and ask for help when you need it
- Find a constructive way in which to remember and memorialize the life that has ended
- Trust that life and living can and do go on. Talk to someone who has gone through losing someone they love
- You may react differently than someone else, but that's all right. Grief is a very personal experience.

**Grieving is healing. In order for you to fully live again, sorrow must not be denied!**

**Grief needs to be expressed or processed so it can be healed. If not, other symptoms may appear that will affect our health and/or behaviour.**

