

General Tips to Support All Ages After A Loss

- **Recognize typical grief reactions, including:**

- decreased appetite
- difficulty sleeping
- decreased concentration
- increased sadness
- social withdrawal



- Note: Youth sometimes feel angry toward the deceased for leaving them.



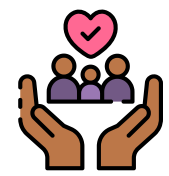
- **Be direct and honest about death**, using terms like "death," "die," or "dying" instead of euphemisms.
- **Be patient and concise**, repeat important information as needed, and be prepared to answer the same question multiple times.
- **Listen attentively, acknowledge emotions, and refrain from passing judgment.**



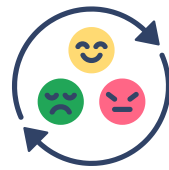
General Tips to Support All Ages After A Loss



- **Express your feelings honestly and calmly** to encourage children to share their thoughts and grief openly.



- **Avoid making assumptions and imposing your opinions on children and youth.**



- **Young people may experience various emotions**, and each person's experience is unique. There is no one correct way to cope with loss, and emotions and actions will vary and change throughout the grieving process.



- **Assure individuals that their emotions are normal after a death** but seek professional help immediately if they express any risk to themselves or others, such as suicidal thoughts.



- **Recognize cultural variations in grieving and paying respects to the deceased and their families.**



- **Consider a person's behavior, mentality, and understanding of mortality, especially for individuals with developmental disabilities who may struggle to communicate.** Despite limitations in communication, they are still impacted by death, often exhibiting behaviors such as increased obsession, frustration, physical complaints, marital problems, and self-stimulatory tendencies.

Tips to Support Preschool Children After A Loss

- Avoid using euphemisms when discussing death, especially with young children who may not understand death or believe it is reversible.
- Allow children to express their feelings and thoughts about death through play and painting.
- Be prepared to answer questions repeatedly and offer specific details in your responses.
- Possible reactions after an unexpected death may include:
 - Crying or screaming
 - Clinging to caregivers or other trusted adults
 - Fear of separation
 - Regressive behaviors such as wetting pants and thumb sucking
 - Decreased verbalization



Tips to Support Elementary School Individuals After A Loss

- These individuals may ask questions to understand what happened. Be patient and refer them to adults who can provide answers.
- Acknowledge younger children' emotions and anxieties about death, but avoid assigning meaning to their magical thinking, as they may believe they caused the death.
- Provide various avenues for expression to those aged nine to twelve, as they may feel uncomfortable expressing their emotions and observing others' grieving behaviors.
- Possible reactions include:
 - Behavioral difficulties
 - Decreased concentration
 - Poor school performance
 - Depression
 - Irritability
 - Withdrawal
 - Somatic complaints (headaches & stomachaches)



Tips to Support Middle and High School Youth After A Loss

- If youth are uncomfortable sharing their emotions with you or their peers, don't force them. Instead, give them an opportunity to express their emotions in private.
- Youth often turn to social media for support. Pay attention to what they share and post. Encourage a young person to reach out and help a friend in need.
- Mid- to late-teenage, aged individuals typically feel more comfortable expressing their emotions and grieving in ways similar to adults.
- High school youth may use physical contact, such as hugging or touching the arm, to show their support and empathy.
- **Possible reactions include:**
 - Poor concentration
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
 - High-risk behaviors or substance use
 - Emotional numbing
 - Suicidal thoughts

