

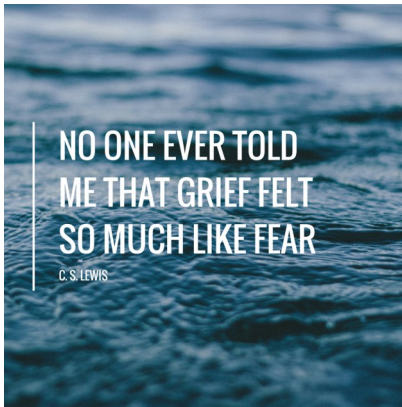


Toolkit for Supporting Children



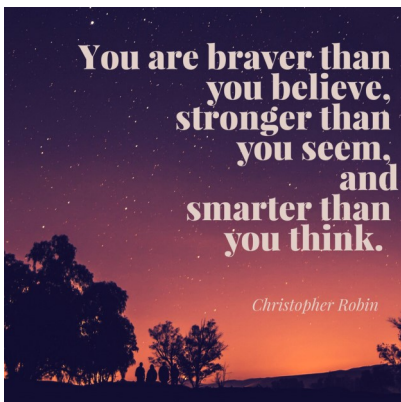
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When someone we love dies, it is difficult to comprehend, cope, and continue forward in life, and these complicated emotions can be intense and confusing to wade through as an adult. As a child, it can be incredibly un-hinging to experience and begin to cope with these feelings. When supporting a child, it is important to remember to not dictate what their grief journey should look like, but you should support them during the process and encourage them to express their emotions in healthy ways. This toolkit includes a booklist, helpful tips, and online resources that can help you support a grieving child.

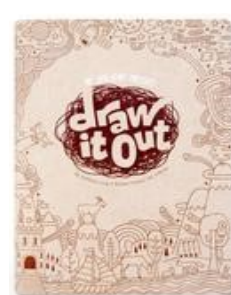
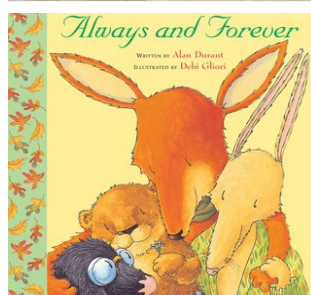
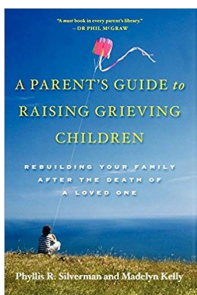
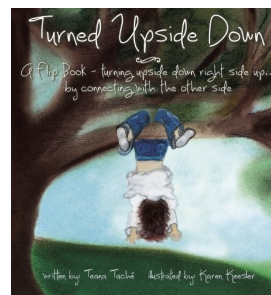
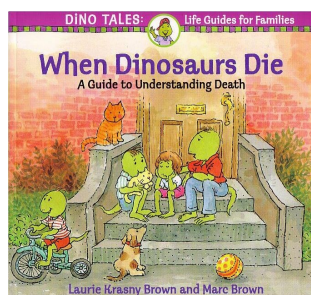
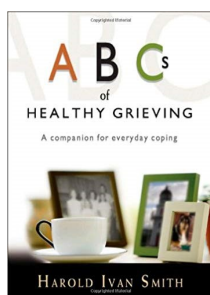
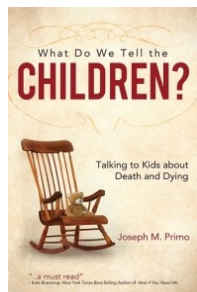


How Do I Support My Kids?

- **Listen** to your child! Let them safely express their emotions, frustrations, fears, and anxieties. Telling them how they should feel is not helpful. Let them know that a range of different emotions is normal. Sometimes children express their grief through anger or fear, and it is important to allow the child to express their grief in their own way.
- **Use** direct language when talking to your child about death and grief. Depending on their age, the use of figurative language (“Grandma is sleeping now.”) can be confusing and possibly make he/she believe the loved one will wake up or return. It is important to use direct language (ex. death, died, pain, & grief) when discussing this topic with your children.
- **Encourage** them to find healthy outlets to cope with strong emotions! Try some of these activities with your children: meditating, taking breaks, exercising, painting, journaling, or listening to music.
- **Take** care of yourself first! You cannot support the child until you support yourself. Instill good coping skills, develop a self-care plan, and express your emotions — this way you can become a role model for your child.
- **Know** that grief comes in waves! You and your teen are going to have GOOD days and BAD days. That is OK! Allow your teen to grieve in their own unique way.
- **Foster** ways to remember your loved one! These rituals can keep your connection with your loved one strong. Try these activities with your teen: make a scrapbook, visit your loved one’s grave, plant something in his/her honor, do their favorite traditions during holidays.



Books to Support You & Your Child



Online Resources

- **What's Your Grief**— podcast & www.whatsyourgrief.com: created by two mental health professionals with 20+ years of experience in bereavement and grief. It is a good source of grief education for your grief journey and how you can support children and teens.
- **The Dougy Center**—www.dougy.org: wealth of grief resources for children, teens, young adults, and adults. Access to the Dougy Center bookstore, which has additional resources for supporting children and teens.
- **Scholastic Resources** — www.scholastic.com: grief resources for children, teens, a of guardians of children & teens, and teachers. It is a good source of grief education that includes kid-centric online resources, supportive adult online resources, online support groups, and booklists for teens, children, teachers, and supportive adults.

Quick Tips

- Take care of yourself first
- Be patient & open-minded
- Keep connected with friends and family—Don't isolate yourselves
- No grief process is the same!
- Be available to your teen
- Regularly check-in with other adults in their life— coaches, teachers, counselors, etc.

