

## Things that can help you :

**Sleep, eat well, and drink water.** Staying physically active by playing sports and exercising can help.

**Express your feelings.** If you are angry: punch pillows, throw or kick balls outside, pound clay, rip up paper or scream into a pillow. When you feel sad: have a special place to go, take a walk, talk with a friend or grown up.

**Write or draw in a journal (or workbook).** You might want to write a letter to your parent who died. This can be a way to say things you wanted to tell him/her.

**Read a favorite book.**

**Listen to some music you like.**

**Ask for hugs whenever you need them.** Everyone in your family will need to get and give lots of hugs.

**One more thought** There may be many up and down days while you grieve. Over time the feelings will be less strong. You won't ever forget or stop loving your parent. Things will not feel so terrible forever. Don't feel guilty about having some fun while you are grieving. Your parent who died would want you to enjoy life and have some happiness. Remember to take good and gentle care of yourself.



SCHOOL AGE



We are sorry that your parent died. This is a very sad and upsetting time for you and your family. We want to share some ideas to help you talk about the death and your feelings.

We want you to remember that you are still a kid. It is important for you to play and have time with your friends. You will have lots of different feelings and all of these are okay to talk about. It will take lots of time, but you and your family will get through this time together.



## Feelings

When someone we love dies, people can be very sad. Sometimes they cry. Kids usually have “feeling bursts.” You might feel sad, and then want to go play with friends. Know that when you are sad, you can always ask for hugs. Sometimes you might cry and that is okay too. Kids can have lots of different feelings when a parent dies. You might feel mad, scared, worried, guilty and lonely. It can help to talk to grown ups about your feelings. All these feelings are called grief.

## Common Questions Kids Have:

These are all questions that kids have when a mom/ dad dies. It is ok for you to ask your family any question you have. No question is silly or dumb. Sometimes even adults don’t know all the answers.

### What caused Mom or Dad’s death?

This is a question many kids wonder about. You might be curious about what happened in the body and why it stopped working.

### Is it my fault?

It is not your fault. You didn’t do anything to make this happen. Some kids think that if they had said something or acted differently their parent would not have died. Many grown-ups can have these thoughts, too. Thoughts and wishes do not cause someone to die. You did not cause your parent’s death.

### Will other people I love die? Will I die?

When someone in your family dies, it is common to worry about these questions. Some kids worry their other parent will die. It is very unusual for this to happen. Kids might worry that they will die, too. It is rare for a child to die, especially one who is healthy. Talk to your family about your worries.

### Who is going to take care of me?

Your family and people who love you will take care of you. If you have worries or questions, make sure you ask your family about these.

## Is death really forever?

When someone dies you might wish for him/her to come back. You might have a dream where he/she is alive again. This is normal. Once a body dies it can’t be fixed. Many families have different religious or spiritual beliefs. Some people believe that when people die, their bodies die, but their spirits go to a different place (like heaven). Ask your family about their religious or spiritual beliefs.

## I don’t want to be different from my friends.

Sometimes your friends may act differently towards you because they don’t know what to say. This is ok. Just being together and hanging out can help make you feel better.

## When you are grieving it is normal to have:

**Trouble sleeping** You might have a hard time falling to sleep or waking up in the morning. Some kids will wake up in the middle of the night. Grief can make you very tired.

**Dreams** Many kids will have dreams about their parent who died. Sometimes the dreams can be comforting or funny. Some kids might have nightmares or scary dreams. Talking about your dreams can help you feel better.

**“Feeling Bursts”** You might find that feelings come from “out of the blue.” You can hear a song and feel like crying. You may get really angry over something that seems like it isn’t that big of a deal.

**Concentration** It might be harder to do school work or pay attention. You might feel shocked or numb for awhile.

**Fears and worries** You might feel more afraid or have more worries after a parent dies. This will get better over time.

**Physical Feelings** Headaches, stomachaches, feeling tired, worried and irritable are common. Some kids have changes in their appetite (not as hungry or eating more).