



SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND TEENS THROUGH GRIEF AND ANTICIPATORY GRIEF



INHERITANCE OF HOPE
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HOW INFANTS GRIEVE

HOW I MIGHT SHOW GRIEF:

- May show signs of irritability
- React strongly to separation
- May exhibit regressive behaviors (changes in eating, sleeping, etc.)

HOW YOU CAN HELP ME:

- Create a safe, nurturing, and comfortable environment to the best of your ability
- Be mindful to not over-stimulate but use appropriate distraction (singing, Peek-a-Boo, etc.)
- Use familiar toys/comfort items (baby blanket, stuffed animal)



HOW TODDLERS GRIEVE

HOW I MIGHT SHOW GRIEF:

- Bothered/agitated by changes in schedules or routines (even seemingly small or insignificant changes)
- React strongly to separation and feel abandoned
- Tantrums, confusion, regression (like irregular sleep)
- Ask repetitive questions



HOW YOU CAN HELP ME:

- Give warnings of endings/changes in activities to help with transitions in simple phrases ("last one", "first, then")
- Create a safe, nurturing and comforting relationship
- Have patience to answer questions
- Encourage self-soothing activities (blowing bubble breaths, counting, etc.), and embrace creative outlets of self expression (smashing play-doh, wiggle dancing the feelings out, etc.)



HOW PRESCHOOLERS GRIEVE

HOW I MIGHT SHOW GRIEF:

- Feel responsible for causing the illness, experience feelings of guilt
- Play to process
- Capable of showing sadness for only short periods of time
- Strong desire for affection, and/or aggressive behaviors

HOW YOU CAN HELP ME:

- Offer reassurance of safety, self-worth, and give appropriate praise
- Embrace PLAY!
- Have patience to answer questions
- Mirror back facial expressions, put names to the emotions they are expressing. Validate them.
- Offer appropriate choices to give a sense of control



HOW SCHOOL-AGERS GRIEVE

HOW I MIGHT SHOW GRIEF:

- Fear that others they love will die, sometimes express even a fixation on death
- Have trouble verbally expressing their feelings or appear non-effected by grief, but that isn't to say they are oblivious
- May blame self for parent's illness
- Are more prone to showing distress through behavior problems or avoidant behaviors

HOW YOU CAN HELP ME:

- Offer a relationship that is caring, welcoming, and re-assuring
- When appropriate, encourage alternative ways to express emotions (art, listening to music, etc.)
- Encourage relationships/commonalities between peers
- Maintain a steady, non-reactive relationship with the child despite any heightened expressions of emotions



HOW TEENS GRIEVE

HOW I MIGHT SHOW GRIEF:

- Withdraw and act like they don't want to talk/hide their feelings to protect
- Feel like they need to take over the loved one's role
- Act out in anger or engage in risky or attention-seeking behavior
- Desire to grieve with peers
- Denial/repression of feelings



HOW YOU CAN HELP ME:

- Be open, accepting, and inviting of emotions
- Normalize opportunities to be a kid
- Encourage relationships/commonalities between peers
- Be comfortable with and embrace the silence

