

## Resources

For more information about grief and local support groups, call:

After Suicide 265-0449

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention AFSP – Western New York 202-2783  
[www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)

A Caring Place (bereavement program for children and their families) 475-8800

The Center for Compassion & Healing at LifeTime Care 475-8800

Crime Victim's Resource Center 753-2872

The Consortium for Trauma, Illness & Grief in School 613-7632  
[www.tigconsortium.org](http://www.tigconsortium.org)

Families and Friends of Murdered Children and Victims of Violence 262-3827

Kids Adjusting Through Support (KATS) 654-5555



A program of the  
Monroe County Office of Mental Health  
1099 Jay Street, Building J  
Rochester, NY 14611

For more information, please contact  
Cherie Conte at  
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## Grief: Coping with Sudden or Traumatic Loss



The Consortium on Trauma, Illness  
& Grief in schools

585-753-2881

# What is Grief?



**Grief** is a normal emotional response to loss particularly following the death of a family member or close friend. Our experience of grief will be affected by the whether the death was

sudden or unexpected, the cause of the death, and our relationship to the person who died. Each person's expression of grief is unique and there is no "right or wrong" way to grieve.

## Common Symptoms of Grief

**Physical:** Chest pains, stomach pains, headaches, & nausea are common. You may feel fatigue and have difficulty sleeping. It is also normal to have trouble concentrating and to feel restless.

**Emotional:** You may feel a range of feelings including sadness, anger, guilt, anxiety, loneliness, relief, irritability and numbness. Strong feelings may come suddenly and without warning.

**Social:** During times of grief some people withdraw and lack interest to engage with others. Others become more dependent and do not want to be alone. You may also be more sensitive and experience difficulty with relationships.

**Spiritual:** Especially when a death was sudden or traumatic, it is not uncommon to question spiritual values or even lose faith. Some people also experience anger with or feel betrayal by God or their Spiritual Force.

## Coping with Grief

- Grieve at your own pace and be patient with yourself
- Ask for and accept help when needed
- Spend time with people who provide you with support
- Eat, sleep and exercise regularly
- Do something that you enjoy
- Keep to a routine
- Journal
- If you follow a religious tradition, engage in mourning rituals and/or prayer

## Children and Grief

"If one is old enough to love, one is old enough to grieve."

- Alan D. Wolfelt

Just as adults grieve, so do children. A child's grief experience will be based on their development and personality.



## Common Feelings, Thoughts & Behaviors of the Grieving Child

- Crying at unexpected times
- Physical complaints – stomach-aches, headaches, fatigue
- Retelling events of the deceased's death & funeral
- Difficulty concentrating at school
- Needing to be near an adult all the time
- Worrying about safety, other people getting sick or dying
- Being angry at everybody and everything
- Not talking about the deceased or loss at all

## Needs of a Grieving Child

- To be allowed to grieve
- To have their loss acknowledged
- Normalization of grief
- Accurate information
- Careful listening
- Help with overwhelming feelings
- Continued routine activities
- Opportunities to remember

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