

CONNECTIONS

FOR TEENS



What You May Need While Experiencing Grief

Losing someone you love is a life-changing experience. During this time, you may find that you have needs you haven't had before. You may need of extra support from family and friends. Or you may need information about what to expect or how to make sense of all that you're feeling. Most grieving teens need a way of expressing their feelings, either through talking with someone, writing or doing artwork.

Helpful Hints

1. Stay connected with friends

This is an important time for you to stay connected to supportive friends. Talking on the phone and spending time together becomes even more important. Your friends who know you best will be able to understand when you don't feel up to doing activities you used to do. You need friends who are willing to listen and encourage you to get help from an adult if you need it.

2. Have an outlet for expression

As much as you need close friends during this time, it is equally important to have an outlet for expression since you will have lots of new, different and often very intense feelings. Talking about your feelings, journaling or writing poems are great ways to express your thoughts. Drawing or "playing with paint" provides an expressive outlet, allowing you to release feelings which you may be unable to

talk about. Sometimes, sharing your artwork or poems provides an important connection to others. Playing a musical instrument is also a meaningful way to actively express your feelings.

3. Join a group or talk to a counselor

When you are grieving you may feel a sense of isolation. Although some friends want to help, others don't know what to do or say. Since teens have a strong need to identify with peers, connecting with a small group dealing with similar issues can be helpful. Being with peers who are struggling with the craziness of grief is often very comforting. A group provides a safe place for you to talk about your feelings and to share and support others. Sometimes having a trained grief counselor who can listen to your concerns and teach you about the grief process is really helpful too.

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True peace comes with the discovery that we can respect the seasons of life with a spacious and undefended heart. In it we learn to trust, to rest in the truth of the way things are, to willingly accept the measure of joy and sorrow we are given. - Jack Kornfield

Campin' Out!

A Great Way to Cope with Loss

Attending camp is a way to meet other kids and teens who are coping with a significant loss. Camp provides a way to form strong bonds with others. Team building is often a focus of initial activities, in order to “break the ice.” Many teens find the time away from home provides a needed break from the heaviness of interacting with other grieving family members.

Carefully constructed group sessions and a memorial service are intermingled with activities such as writing, artwork, crafts and games. Camp includes outdoor activities such as hiking, water games or swimming, and campfires that allow



Teens Campin' Out at the HopeWest Kids Teen Retreat in Mesa, CO. Camp is a good way to build relationships through common bonds.

campers to get outside, relate to the natural world and enjoy fresh air – all things that are healthy when you are grieving!

For more information about camps visit HopeWestCO.org.

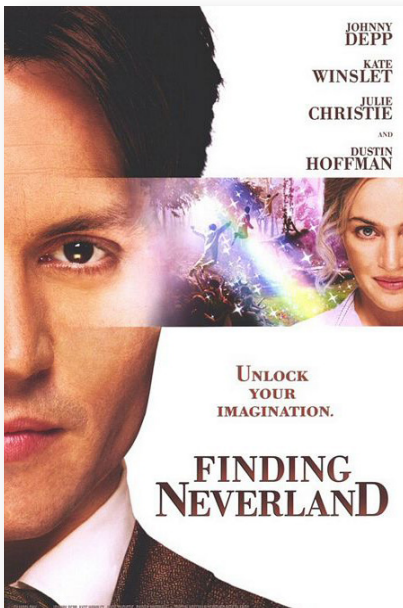
Coping Corner

Ideas You Can Use to Help Your Grief Heal

Making a mandala is as simple as drawing within a circle. In many cultures the circular form represents healing. Working within a circle is a tool for focusing and centering. At a time when life feels chaotic this exercise can make you feel calm and centered. So, give a mandala a try. It's as simple as doodling in your notebook. Choose colors that appeal to you and express your feelings. The green image to the left is an example, but feel free to create your own.

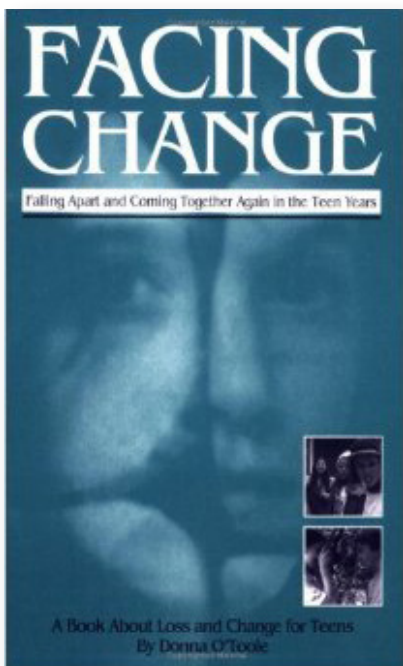


This Month's Helpful Book & Movie



Movie: ***Finding Neverland***

The movie details the experiences of Peter Pan author J.M. Barrie, which lead him to write the children's classic. He got to know four children who have no father. Drawing from his time with the kids, he writes a story about children who don't want to grow up.



Book: ***Facing Change: Falling Apart and Coming Together Again in the Teen Years*** by Donna B. O'Toole

This book is about loss and change. "Loss means being without someone or something that was loved, familiar, important or desired." Each chapter helps give ideas on how to deal effectively with loss. There are chapters from "What is Grief" to "Bouncing Back." Tips and ideas are provided to help create a great support system. This book is a wonderful way to learn many different coping strategies.

JOURNAL PROMPT



Something I would tell you about if you were here is...

Feel free to use this space to write or draw a message to your loved one.