

CONNECTIONS

FOR TEENS



Anger in Grief

Grief can make you feel angry. That anger is often directed at the situation or at family and friends. Sometimes you may be angry at the loved one who died or even at God. Sometimes you may not even know the source of the anger, but it feels like a raging tiger inside just clawing to come out.

Anger can be hard to understand. It is usually an emotion that goes along with other feelings. It pops up often when you are hurt, afraid or disappointed. You are hurt because a loved one has died. You may be very disappointed

because someone you thought would be there for you is no longer there.

It is important for you to understand that it is normal in the months after a death to feel more anger. It is natural. It is okay to be angry, but it is also important to express it in ways that do not hurt others and cause them to withdraw from you. Anger can surface when you least expect it, at inappropriate times or places. It's important to identify what makes you angry – a person, a situation or a place – which bring on this feeling.

When Do I Need Help with My Anger?

1. When the intensity of your anger exceeds what is warranted by anything anybody said or did.
2. When your relationships suffer because you often say or do hurtful things when you're angry.
3. When you feel like a "raging tiger" is inside most of the time.
4. When your anger causes problems at home, school or work.
5. When others tell you your anger is a problem.
6. When you feel depressed.



The wind of anger blows out
the lamp of intelligence.
- Barbara Johnson

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Everyone who lives long enough to love deeply will experience great losses. Don't let fear of loss, or the losses themselves, take away your ability to enjoy the wonderful life that is yours.

-Barbara "Cutie" Cooper

When you feel angry but do not express it at all...

You may “explode” like an erupting volcano and feel rage that falls like hot lava on all those around you. It can cause damage to relationships with family and friends or cause problems at home, school and work.

Or, sometimes “stuffed” anger turns inward causing depression. Either way, stuffed anger doesn't ever “just go away.” It always turns into something that hurts yourself or others. Each of us needs to find ways to handle our anger so that it does not create bigger problems for ourselves or others. As you learn to express and manage your anger in healthy ways, it can help you begin to feel like you are gaining some control back into your life, and that is a good feeling!

Coping Corner

Ideas You Can Use to Help Your Grief Heal

-- 1 --

Physical exercise can “burn up” some of the energy created by your anger.

-- 2 --

Talk about your anger – what are you angry about?

-- 3 --

Give yourself some space from the person at whom you are angry. Talk with someone you trust after you cool off.

-- 4 --

Go outside where no one can hear you and yell and scream about your anger.

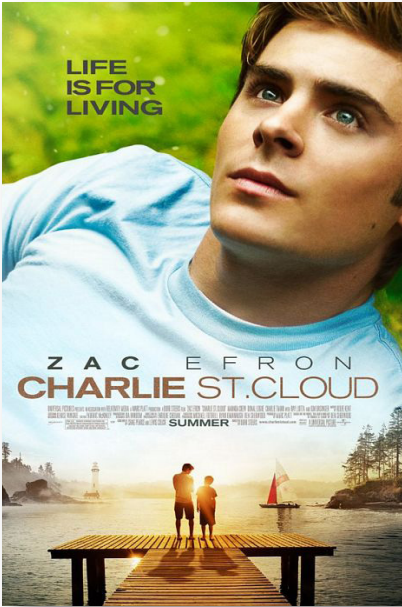
-- 5 --

Write in your journal about things that make you angry.

-- 6 --

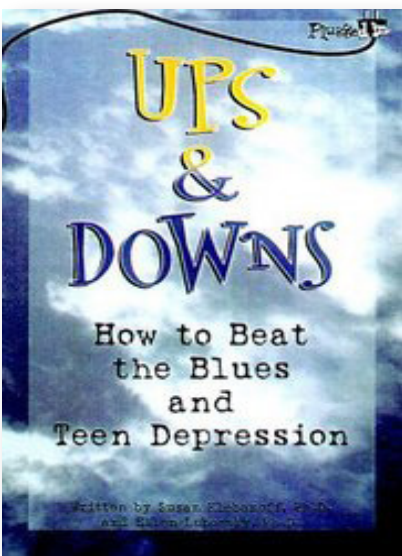
If you feel you can't control your anger, talk with an adult. Ask them to help you.

This Month's Helpful Book & Movie



Movie: *Charlie St. Cloud* rated PG-13

Charlie St. Cloud is a young man overcome by grief at the death of his younger brother. He's affected so much that he takes a job as caretaker of the cemetery in which his brother is buried. Charlie has a special lasting bond with his brother though, as he can see him. Charlie meets up with his brother (Sam) each night to play catch and talk. Then, a girl comes into Charlie's life and he must choose between keeping a promise he made to Sam or going after the girl he loves.



Book: *Ups & Downs* by Susan Klebanoff, Ph.D. and Ellen Luborsky, Ph.D.

This book explains the difference between normal sad, "down in the dumps" feelings and clinical depression. This book is a straight-talking guide that addresses many real-life situations. It can help you figure out what's wrong, understand the reasons why and figure out where to turn.

JOURNAL & ART PROMPT

Journal Prompt:

Write about something that makes you angry related to the death of your loved one.
When I'm angry, I feel better when . . .

Art Project:

Draw a picture of what your anger looks like. What color is it? What shape is it?