

# CONNECTIONS

## FOR TEENS



## Sadness & Depression

Losing someone you love is one of the hardest things you will ever have to go through. Grief causes a jumble of overwhelming feelings like sadness and depression. Almost every grieving teen experiences sadness. It is a normal and healthy response but is also an unpleasant

feeling caused by realizing a loss has occurred. Sadness brings many different behaviors. Some teens get quiet, some cry, some can't cry and some withdraw. All of these are normal and natural. However, sometimes sadness can turn into a persistent depression.

## What is Depression?

Depression is a condition involving constant symptoms of sadness, hopelessness, difficulty thinking and concentrating, and sometimes, suicidal thoughts. It often includes decreased mental ability, decreased enjoyment of life,

decreased physical activity and a significant increase or decrease in appetite and sleep habits. You may also experience increased irritability and anger. Each of those symptoms can be caused by grief.

## Coping Corner

### Ideas You Can Use to Help Your Grief Heal

- **Cry if you want.** Sometimes you may feel like you want to cry but you can't. Try putting on a sad movie or listen to a meaningful song and see if that brings some tears. Let your feelings take their course.
- **Find a good listener and talk about your loved one.** What was your loved one like and what you remember about them?
- **Get a complete physical from your doctor.** Make sure you are healthy.
- **Eat a nutritious diet and exercise.** Eat lots of fruits and veggies, limit sugar and pop. Get regular exercise and proper sleep. This may sound weird, but good nutrition, exercise and sleep all help balance the brain chemically.
- **Go for a long walk, swim or hike.** Pay attention to what is around you.
- **See a counselor,** if you feel you need additional help with your sadness or depression - don't be afraid to get professional help.

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Never fear shadow. They simply mean there's a light shining somewhere nearby.  
- Ruth E. Renkel



Grief support groups help connect you with other teens and help you focus on ways to cope with grief while learning to move on with life.

## How can I tell if I'm grieving or depressed?

It is not always easy to tell the difference between grieving and depression. Many of the feelings and behaviors are the same. Here are some ways for you to tell if you may be depressed:

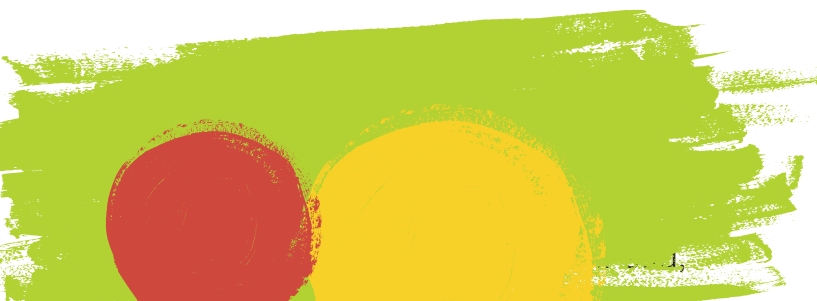
Grieving teens are able to respond to comfort and support offered by others. **Depressed teens often reject any support offered.**

Grieving teens can still experience moments of enjoyment. **Depressed teens often feel no enjoyment and a constant sense of despair.**

depressed feelings to the loss. **Depressed teens often are unable to relate their feelings to any life event – “It’s just there.”**

Grieving teens often feel temporarily bad about themselves but generally feel OK. **Depressed teens often feel they are no good or worthless.**

Grieving teens may wish they could be dead to be with their loved one, but they really don't want to die and don't think of suicide. **Depressed teens may feel they want to die and even think of how they might kill themselves. If you feel this way, please tell someone who can help you...a parent, a teacher, adult friend, or counselor. Getting some help may save your life.**

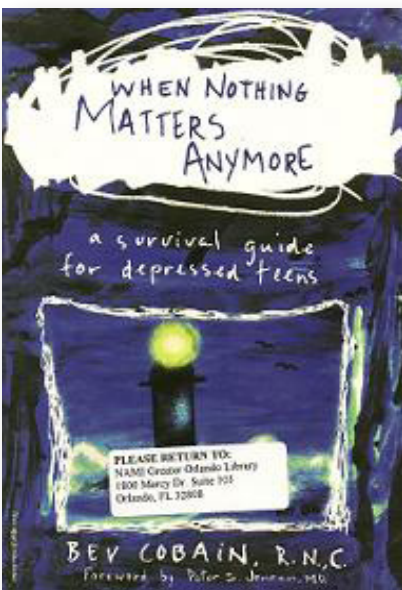


# This Month's Helpful Book & Movie



## Movie: *UP*

A young Carl Fredrickson meets an adventure-spirited girl named Ellie. They both dream of going to a lost land in South America. 70 years later, Ellie has died and Carl remembers the promise he made to her of visiting South America. Carl sets out to fulfill this dream in his house that is tied by thousands of balloons to help lead him there. Russell, a wilderness explorer of only 8 years of age, becomes a stowaway on this amazing adventure.



## Book: *When Nothing Matters Anymore* by Bev Cobain, R.N.

This book has real stories from teens about their experiences. The book focuses on how depression affects your brain, how drugs and alcohol interact with depression, and how depression can lead to suicidal feelings. There are survival tips to dealing with depression.

# Information About Suicide

- Teens who think about suicide are trying to escape problems that seem too overwhelming to solve or to handle.
- The tragedy is that suicide is a permanent solution to temporary problems.
- Each year about 6,000 young people complete suicide in the United States.
- Frequently families and friends of teens who complete suicide, say they had no idea that the teen was depressed or suicidal. They also say they wished they had the chance to help the teen, before the teen felt suicide was the only option. They wished the teen had just talked to them about what was going on.

## If you are having thoughts of suicide or harming yourself:

- GET HELP IMMEDIATELY!
- Don't act on your suicidal thoughts, give life and help a chance.
- Talk with an adult you trust (a parent, friend, relative, school counselor, teacher, coach, clergy/pastor or doctor). If that adult doesn't respond, tell another adult. Keep talking until you get help!
- Find a phone number online for a Suicide Prevention Hotline or Crisis Hotline and call.
- If you feel unable to control the urge to hurt yourself, call 911 or go immediately to an emergency room.

## JOURNAL PROMPT

### Journal Prompt:

What things, events, people, places, etc. trigger feelings of sadness or depression?  
If I'm feeling sad or depressed, I feel better when . . .