

RAINBOW CONNECTIONS

ISSUE 1 | AFTER THE DEATH

You will receive a mailing once a month for one year with information about loss and grief. We hope these mailings help you understand more about the difficulties you may be going through. We hope you will feel less alone in your grief.

“At the funeral my sister had a note for my dad and asked the man to put in the coffin after we left. My dad could read it as she was writing it.”

- Laura, age 10

Each month we will write about children and grief, and describe an activity you can do alone or with a friend or family member. Each mailing will also include suggestions for books to read and helpful ideas from kids.

In this month's mailing we will write a little bit about what happens after the death of someone we love. When someone we know and love dies, we miss them and feel sad. We might feel numb or in shock. This means we might not be able to feel any feelings for awhile. We might not be able to cry. We might be having a hard time believing the person we love is really dead.

Sometimes families have what is called a “viewing” of the body to help them accept that their loved one is dead. A viewing is when family members and friends come to a mortuary to see the dead person's body one last time before a funeral or before the cremation or burial. The body has been prepared for the viewing by being dressed nicely and placed in a casket. Sometimes members of the family put notes or flowers or things that remind them of their loved one into the casket.



There are other rituals that help families deal with the death of their loved one. Some families have a funeral or memorial service. This is a time to remember the person who died, to say goodbye, and to get support from others. It is followed by a service and burial at the cemetery grave site. The burial is often done by cemetery workers after the family and friends have left.

"We were singing and it was an Irish wake...and we were celebrating after the death."

- Susan, age 7

Often at a funeral there are people crying and others who are not crying because they are in shock or feeling numb. It is okay to cry or not cry at these times.

ACTIVITY IDEA

Memory Book

An activity many kids have found helpful is to create a memory book. This is a scrapbook in which you can keep information about the person who died (such as important dates, favorite foods, movies and hobbies), and pictures and drawings about him or her. Each month we will give some suggestions for this book.



This month you might draw a picture of the memorial service or funeral. You could also start a fact page listing your loved one's name, nickname, birthday, date of death, date of funeral or memorial, how the death happened, and anything else you want to add.

From time to time you may want to share your memory book with people you love.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Saying Good-bye to Daddy by Judith Vigna
Frightened, lonely and angry after her father is killed in a car accident, Clare is helped through the grieving process by her mother and grandfather. Includes discussions about funerals and death.

A Funeral for Whiskers by Dr. Lawrence Balter
Sandy is sad and confused after her pet cat Whiskers dies. She is helped by her parents and a funeral for Whiskers.

SHARE HOW YOU ARE DOING!

Please call us if you would like to share your experiences with the feelings talked about in Rainbow Connections, or any other problems you might have. Kids are always teaching us about their grief and what helps them.



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