

CONNECTIONS

FOR TEENS



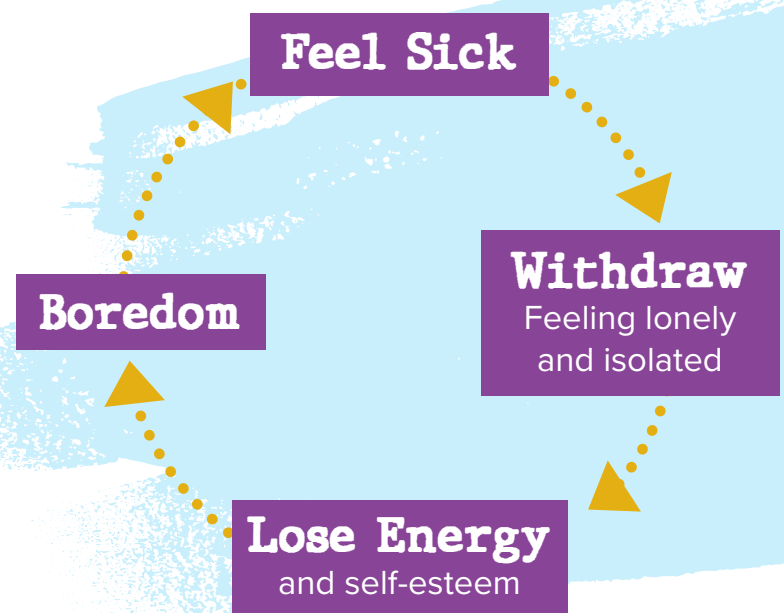
Creating Balance in Grief

Grief is hard work! In this issue we are going to talk about how to create an environment for yourself that balances the distress of working through the intense, sometimes overwhelming feelings of grief and moving forward by living your life.

When a death is new, most of us respond by feeling numb or disconnected, like it is all a bad dream. As the feeling of shock wears off, often pain grows a little sharper. When in pain, sometimes we forget enjoyable things we used to do. Sometimes we don't forget; we just feel guilty about resuming enjoyable parts of our lives. We are afraid that enjoying life again is being disloyal to our loved one. We may feel that the pain of grief keeps us connected to our loved one.

While these feelings may be common, nothing could be further from the truth. Having the courage to reinvest in life and activities you enjoy takes incredible effort and it is a great tribute to your loved one. Developing hobbies or participating in things you enjoy does not mean you will forget your loved one. It means you have built love and memories of them into your life in such a way they will always be with you as you grow and change.

Sometimes we feel like we are stuck in grief. We can get stuck feeling bad and not wanting to do anything. When we are stuck, boredom can set in. Often we don't think of grief as boring. It can be. The cycle looks like this:



Breaking out of this cycle takes energy and courage. Re-involve yourself in friendships and activities. Even with limited energy and marginal interest in something, it is possible to begin to work yourself out of that stuck place. Look at the coping corner for ideas. Whatever you decide to do, begin today. You can do it!

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You cannot prevent the birds of sorrow from flying over your head, but you can prevent them from building a nest in your hair.

-Chinese Proverb

Coping Corner

Ideas You Can Use to Help Yourself Heal

-- 1 --

Plan one enjoyable activity to participate in this week.

-- 2 --

Start a hobby, exercise program, or participate in a sport. It will help you feel better physically and emotionally. Better yet, start with a friend.

-- 3 --

Share your feelings about starting to feel better with someone you trust.

-- 4 --

Write a letter to your loved one explaining your love for them and your decision to create balance in your life.

-- 5 --

Volunteer for something you believe in. It feels good to help others.

-- 6 --

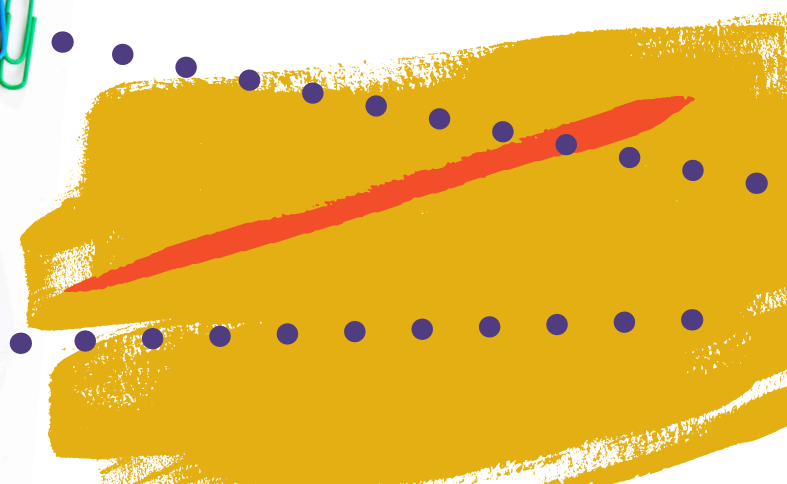
Read a good, exciting book.

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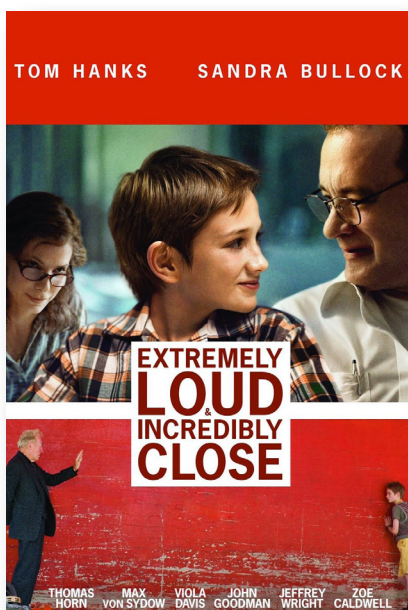
Do something your loved one liked to do.

-- 8 --

Listen to your favorite music or your loved one's favorite music.

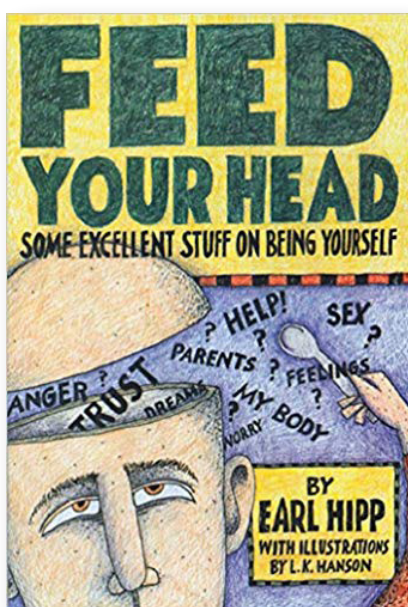


This Month's Helpful Book & Movie



Movie: *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* rated PG-13

Oskar, who lost his father in the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center, is convinced that his dad left a final message for him somewhere in the city. Upon finding a mysterious key in his father's closet, Oskar sets out in search of the lock it fits. Feeling disconnected from his grieving mother and driven by a tirelessly active mind, Oskar has a journey of discovery that takes him beyond his loss and leads to a greater understanding of the world.



Book: *Feed Your Head Some Excellent Stuff on Being Yourself* By Earl Hipp

Feed Your Head is a straight-forward, easy to read book on a bunch of different topics including anger, depression, change and crisis, to name a few. One nice addition is the many quotations by teens struggling with the issues being discussed. If you want a fast read, filled with information and ideas, this one is for you!

JOURNAL PROMPT

I enjoy . . .

I feel good when . . .

