

CONNECTIONS

FOR TEENS



How do I know when I'm getting better?

Most people, who have experienced grief due to the death of a loved one, want to know how long the feelings of grief will last. There is not a specific amount of time that grief lasts. Each person's grief is unique and their grief experience will also be unique. Teens will notice that how they grieve and how other family members and/or friends grieve can be very different and yet, in some aspects, can be very similar. There is not a correct way to grieve—which means you have to figure out what works for you.

Regardless of how long your grief lasts, you will begin to notice changes that show you are moving through the grief process.

"Life is no more a trip to be planned than grief is a problem to be solved. Both are journeys to be traveled."

-James Emswiler

These are some of the ways teens say they know when they are moving through grief:

- You don't feel sad or depressed as often
- You are no longer tempted to skip classes or school
- You feel rested when you wake up in the morning
- You can concentrate on your homework
- You feel able to think better and clearer
- You have longer periods of time between grief bursts
- Your grief bursts are not as intense
- You laugh more
- You have more energy
- You can listen to music without hearing songs that make you cry
- You have an increased interest in people/activities
- You remember more good memories of your loved one
- The pain of the loss has diminished

The hardest part of grief—the pain—does soften over time. However, many people say that because they had a loved one die, their lives are forever changed. Some people say they learn things about themselves during the grief process. **CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE . . .**



Your grief path is yours alone, and no one else can walk it, and no one else can understand it.
-Terri Irwin

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For example, a person may feel they are more understanding of other people since they have been through a difficult time. Or, a person may make a decision about what career they choose because of their experience—a teacher or a doctor, for example.

Missing the person who died will last a lifetime—which is why grief is often expressed as a journey. Often teens feel they need “permission” to move through the grief and get on with their life. Teens can honor their loved one by moving forward with their life.

Coping Corner

Ideas You Can Use to Help Your Grief Heal

As a teen you probably take selfies alone or with your friends. The following activity challenges you to take it a step further. Try photography as a way of illustrating your healing journey. The idea is to take photos in your own creative way that expresses your healing process. There are some suggestions of themes listed below. Use your imagination and your creativity!

Feelings / Coping

Take pictures of yourself that show the strong emotions of grief or take pictures of things that reflect those feelings. These photos are another way to share with others when asked “how are you?” Take pictures that show how you cope with feelings.

Memories

Take pictures of special places or items that remind you of your loved one (ex. something

that belonged to them or something they gave to you.)

Gratitude is the Attitude

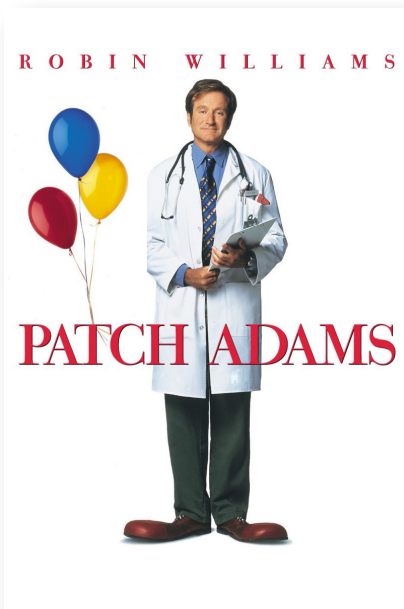
Take photos of yourself doing things you enjoy. These photos can remind you in darker, harder times that life is still enjoyable.

Moving Forward

Take a selfie of a goal you set for yourself. Want to learn to play a piano? Take a picture of a sheet of music. Want to rock climb? Take a picture of mountain peak. These can serve as inspirational reminders and keep you looking toward the future.

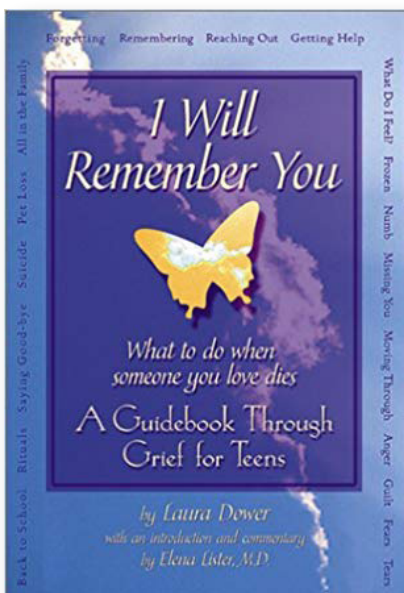
You can write captions for your photos, post them to share, or create another piece of artwork or writing using the photo as inspiration.

This Month's Helpful Book & Movie



Movie: *Patch Adams*

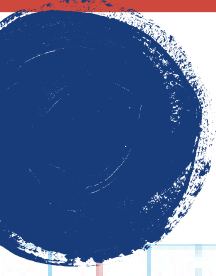
The true story of a heroic man, Hunter “Patch” Adams, determined to become a medical doctor because he enjoys helping people. He ventured where no doctor had ventured before, using humour and pathos.



Book: *I Will Remember You— A Guidebook Through Grief for Teens* by Laura Dower

The theme of this book is hopeful and upbeat as it focuses on moving past your pain, living on and embracing who your special person was to you. Guideposts throughout the book include sections entitled, “The Doctor Is In.” There are also sections entitled “Try This” with activities you can do on your own or with others.

JOURNAL PROMPT



Write a letter or a poem to your loved one. It could be a thank you note. Let him/her know how you are doing. Do you want to thank him/her? Do you have something you need to share with him/her?

A large grid of blue and red lines for writing, with a dashed blue line in the middle of each row.

