

RAINBOW CONNECTIONS

ISSUE 6 | GUILT IN GRIEF

"I would like to tell all you grieving children that you should not say to yourself 'if only I could have done something' you couldn't have done anything. Always express your feelings. Let out your grief. It is hard but it will make you feel better."

- Maria, age 11

When someone we love dies, we have so many different feelings. One of the hardest feelings to deal with is guilt. Guilt means feeling that we did something wrong. We may not have done anything wrong but we may still feel guilty.

After the death of a loved one, people often feel guilty. Sometimes people feel guilty because they didn't have a chance to say goodbye or to be with their loved one when he or she died. People sometimes feel guilty because they are alive and having fun while their loved one is not. Would the person who died want us not to be alive and having fun?

Sometimes children feel guilty because they feel like they should be grieving the way other people in the family do. We explain to children and their parents that everyone grieves

differently. It is important for children to play and take a break from their grief. This is a healthy way for children and adults to grieve.

Often children tell us they feel that if they had only said or done something differently then the person they love wouldn't have died. We remember one girl saying that if only she had gone to the grocery store when her grandmother asked her to, then maybe her grandmother would not have died from cancer. After she shared these thoughts and we reassured her that nothing she did caused her grandmother to die, she felt relieved. If you are having thoughts like these, sharing them with someone who loves you can help you feel better.



There may be things that you wish you had said or done before your loved one died. It can be helpful to write your loved one a letter and tell him or her what is in your heart. You can also write a pretend letter back from your loved one that says what you think the person would write back to you.

"I wished that I said good-bye...saw him one last time. I wish I could have spent more time with him."

- Robert, age 11

ACTIVITY IDEA

Memory Book

Draw or write about something you wish you had said or done differently before your loved one died. You can put this in your memory book if you are making one. You can also write about this in your journal. Is there someone you can talk to about any guilty feelings you have?

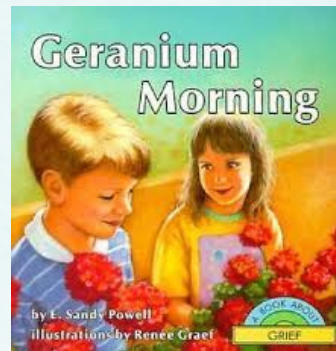


Draw How You Feel

Use this circle to make a face showing how you feel today.



RECOMMENDED BOOKS



Geranium Morning

by E. Sandy Powell
Two friends whose parents die, one suddenly in an accident and one from illness, learn to deal with their grief. The book includes feeling different and

having problems at school, changes in the family after a death, and dealing with guilty feelings.

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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