

CHILDREN
AGED
14-17



WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE GRIEVING PROCESS



WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE GRIEVING PROCESS

CHILDREN AGED 14-17

The death of a loved one and the grief that follows can be hard topics to discuss with kids. We understand that as a parent or carer, you just want to be there for your kids, and know that they're expressing their grief in healthy ways.

This resource and our Grief Resource Hub are here to help you and your kids discuss grief and death in an age-appropriate way.

Please know that we are here to support you and your family – with Camps, resources like this one, and a community of people who understand what you're going through.

To get further support, please call us on 1300 602 465. Or click any of the "ENQUIRE NOW" buttons on our website to fill out a quick questionnaire, which we'll use to match you with the right programs and support.

NAVIGATING YOUR WAY AS A PARENT THROUGH YOUR CHILD'S GRIEVING PROCESS

In order to best support your child, it is important to understand what to expect during the grieving process, and how to manage different grief reactions. Adolescents who have lost someone close to them will experience a range of feelings, thoughts, physical reactions, and behaviours associated with grief over the days, months, and years that follow the loss. Their expressions of grief may be different to adults, and they may slip in and out of grief, so they may appear to be coping some days while other days they struggle greatly. Differing expressions of grief may be influenced by various factors, such as age, family situation, relation to the deceased, and how expected or unexpected the loss was to them.

1. WHAT IS GRIEF, BEREAVEMENT, AND MOURNING?

Grief refers to the natural, internal processes we experience in response to loss. This includes psychological and physiological responses a person experiences after the loss of a significant person. Bereavement is the period of time after a loss, during which grief is experienced and mourning occurs. Mourning is an external expression of adapting to a loss, often in the form of cultural customs, rituals, and ceremonies.



2. HOW ADOLESCENTS GRASP THE CONCEPT OF DEATH

Age and developmental level have considerable influence on adolescents' understanding of and reaction to loss. Adolescents are capable of abstract thinking and can conceptualise death in a more adult manner. Adolescents understand more fully that their lives will be different. They have the capacity to understand the universality, irreversibility, and inevitability of death and to grasp their own finiteness, as well as the finality of someone being deceased. Young people in this age group also have very strong bonds with friends and may seek support from them when in distress.

3. TYPICAL FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS EXPERIENCED BY ADOLESCENTS

Your teen child will likely experience feelings of fear, anger, vulnerability, sadness/despair, shock, longing, guilt, anxiety, and/or loneliness. They will experience a roller coaster of emotions, with unexpected mood changes. It is also common for adolescents to feel resentment that a death has come to their lives. Common behaviours include crying, social withdrawal, restless hyperactivity, absent-minded behaviours, acting out, and avoidance.

4. TYPICAL PHYSICAL REACTIONS EXPERIENCED BY ADOLESCENTS

Your adolescent may experience tightness in the chest, hollowness (pit) in the stomach, dry mouth, shortness of breath, oversensitivity to noise, weakness in muscles, lack of energy/fatigue, and appetite disturbances and/or weight loss/gain. It is also common for him or her to experience sleep disturbances, which may result in them requesting to sleep with a surviving parent or loved one for comfort, despite it seeming age inappropriate. This may be a manifestation of anxiety, depression, or nightmares, and resultant fear of feeling alone.

5. COMMON COPING MECHANISMS

- Adolescents might visit places or carry objects that remind them of the deceased.
- Avoid reminders of the deceased.
- Favour talking to adults outside the family and to peers, rather than to parents.
- Acting with bravado, as though nothing has changed and they're unaffected.
- Hiding or repressing their feelings in an attempt to feel included.
- Taking on more responsibilities, such as looking after others in the deceased person's absence.
- Acting out through risk-taking and/or "death-defying"/risk taking behaviours to provide temporary reassurance that they are invincible or that death is so far into the future.

If you'd like to learn more about Feel the Magic or register your interest for one of our Camps, please don't hesitate to contact us. Just click any of the **"ENQUIRE NOW"** buttons on our website or give us a call on **1300 602 465**.

We have a range of Camps across Australia, both virtual and face-to-face. To find out more about our Camps, click [HERE](#).



Feel the Magic Ltd

ABN: 36 164 874 266 ■ ACN: 164 874 266
PO Box 4327, Pitt Town NSW 2756 Australia