

CHILDREN
AGED
7-13



WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE GRIEVING PROCESS



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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. Children 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. Children's expressions of grief are 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 CHILDREN GRASP THE CONCEPT OF DEATH

Age and developmental level have considerable influence on a child's understanding of and reaction to loss. Typically, children at this age struggle to develop an understanding of death as permanent. Once navigated, this revelation may lead to an increase in anxiety about themselves or other loved ones dying as well. Children at this age have a limited capacity for expressing themselves through language and may express their feelings behaviorally.

3. TYPICAL FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS EXPERIENCED BY CHILDREN

Your child may experience feelings of fear, anger, vulnerability, sadness/despair, shock, longing, guilt, anxiety and loneliness. Typical behaviours include crying, social withdrawal, restless hyperactivity, absent-minded behaviour and avoidance. The need for comfort is particularly important.

4. TYPICAL PHYSICAL REACTIONS EXPERIENCED BY CHILDREN

Your child 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, appetite disturbances and/or weight loss/gain. It is also common for children to experience sleep disturbances, which may result in them requesting to sleep with a surviving parent or loved one for comfort. This may be a manifestation of anxiety, depression, or fears of having nightmares, being alone, or waking up late.

5. COMMON COPING MECHANISMS

- Children may ask you many questions, including questions about how their loved one died, where the person is, and when they are coming back.
- Children may withdraw from family and/or friends.
- Children may act out or misbehave through a display of attention-seeking or aggressive behaviours.
- Children may display concentration difficulties and/or not perform as well at school.
- They might visit places or carry objects that remind them of the deceased, and this is healthy to a point.
- Children often treasure objects that belonged to the deceased.
- Avoid reminders of the deceased under certain circumstances.

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](#).



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