

*** CRISIS INFORMATION FOR PARENTS ***

TYPICAL GRIEF PROCESS

Shock/Denial: Denial, disbelief, numbness, detachment. "It can't be true."

Guilt/Blaming: Feelings of shame, unworthiness, relief, and failure. "It's my fault." "If only..."

Anger: Angry feelings which may be directed towards deceased, world, God, self, or unrelated. "Why?"

Acceptance: Willingness to acknowledge the finality of death and move on with their life.

These reactions may occur in any order or at any time during the grief process.

TYPICAL GRIEF REACTIONS

Anxiety	Changes in eating habits
Sadness	Confused/Disorganized
Fear of separation	Dreams/flashbacks
Crying for no apparent reason	Impulsivity
Difficulty concentrating	Hyperactivity
Difficulty controlling emotions	Acting out: aggressive, hostile behavior, truancy
Mood Swings	Irritability
Withdrawal	Stomach aches/headaches/body aches
Changes in sleeping habits	Regression

WHAT TO DO:

1. Encourage your child to feel and talk about his/her emotions. Listen!
2. If you are concerned about your child's grief reaction, we encourage you to talk to someone. If you would like to talk to a professional please call your child's school counselor, teacher, minister, or any of the resources in your area (see below)
3. Encourage your child to share feelings with someone who can offer assurance empathy, and guidance. This may be you or someone with whom you feel comfortable.

TALKING WITH YOUR CHILD ABOUT DEATH

1. Be direct, simple, and honest, but gentle. Listen.
2. Accept the emotions and reactions your child expresses and do not tell them how to feel.
3. Be patient. Children need to hear the story and to ask the same questions again and again.
4. Allow your child to decide whether they want to participate in the funeral arrangements.
5. Children's books can be very helpful. Consult with your local librarian or bookstore.

SOME EXPLANATIONS THAT MAY NOT HELP:

"Billy went to sleep and will not wake up." This explanation may result in the child's fear of going to bed or to sleep.

"It is God's will." The child will not understand a God who takes a loved one because he may need God in her/his grief. Also, it may lead to the child hating God.

"God took him because he was so good." The child may decide to be bad so that God will not take him too.

"David was sick and went to the hospital where he died." The child needs an explanation about "little" and "big" sickness or injuries. Otherwise, she may be fearful of trips to the hospital, of illness, and of injuries.

RESOURCES (24 HOUR HOTLINES)

Access Line (Winter Haven Hospital)	1-800-723-3248
Peace River Crisis Line	(863) 519-3744