

Helping Children and Teens, Today, Tomorrow and Always: Providing Grief support during the Coronavirus



When a family experiences the death of someone important from either COVID-19 or another cause, traditional ways of mourning and receiving support may not be an option as we navigate this pandemic. Here are some suggestions for ways to support grieving kids and teens right now.

Funerals or memorials are a key part of having a “healthy goodbye” as part of learning to cope with grief, both for adults and children. Being with others who are grieving, being able to express emotions, and having a chance to say goodbye collectively can help start the healing process. The ban on groups over ten people has put a stop to traditional funerals and memorials for now. For example, for Jewish families, sitting shiva must now be done without visits from friends and family. All families are likely missing in-person visits with their support people. For children, this can be particularly hard to understand, and they may feel even more confused in a time when they are already dealing with many new emotions.

For Those Currently Grieving

- ♥ Write a letter to the person who has died. Given current visitor restrictions in hospitals and other healthcare facilities, families may not have the opportunity to say goodbye before their person's death. Whether a sudden or anticipated death, each family member could consider writing a letter to the person who died as a way to say goodbye. You may choose to keep the letter, burn it (in large metal bowl or outdoor fireplace), or tear it up.
- ♥ Work together to plan the memorial for when gathering is permitted again. If it feels right for your family, include children in the planning process.
- ♥ Consider other creative outlets, such as journaling, crafting, dance, or music to begin processing your grief.
- ♥ Gentle reminders: Be kind to yourself and other family member (everyone grieves differently!). Take one day, or moment, at a time. Eat healthy foods. Get plenty of rest.