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Death and Grief: Supporting Children and Youth

Death and loss within a school community can affect anyone, particularly children and adolescents. Whether the death of a classmate, family member, or staff member, students may need support in coping with their grief. Reactions will vary depending on the circumstances of the death and how well-known the deceased is both to individual students and to the school community at-large. Students who have lost a family member or someone close to them will need particular attention. It is important for adults to understand the reactions they may observe and to be able to identify children or adolescents who require support. Parents, teachers, and other caregivers should also understand how their own grief reactions and responses to a loss may impact the experience of a child.

GRIEF REACTIONS

There is no right or wrong way to react to a loss. No two individuals will react in exactly the same way. Grief reactions among children and adolescents are influenced by their developmental level, personal characteristics, mental health, family and cultural influences, and previous exposure to crisis, death, and loss. However, some general trends exist that can help adults understand typical and atypical reactions of bereaved children. Sadness, confusion, and anxiety are among the most common grief responses and are likely to occur for children of all ages.

The Grief Process

Although grief does not follow a specified pattern, there are common stages that children and adolescents may experience with varying sequencing and intensity. The general stages of the grief process are:

- Denial (unwillingness to discuss the loss)
- Anger or guilt (blaming others for the loss)
- Sorrow or depression (loss of energy, appetite, or interest in activities)
- Bargaining (attempts to regain control by making promises or changes in one's life)
- Acceptance or admission (acceptance that loss is final, real, significant, and painful)

Grief Reactions of Concern

The above behaviors are expected and natural reactions to a loss. However, the following behaviors may warrant further attention:

Preschool Level:

- Decreased verbalization
- Increased anxiety (e.g., clinginess, fear of separation)
- Regressive behaviors (e.g., bedwetting, thumb sucking)

Elementary school level:

- Difficulty concentrating or inattention
- Somatic complaints (e.g., headaches, stomach problems)
- Sleep disturbances (e.g., nightmares, fear of the dark)
- Repeated telling and acting out of the event
- Withdrawal
- Increased irritability, disruptive behavior, or aggressive behavior
- Increased anxiety (e.g., clinging, whining)
- Depression, guilt, or anger

Middle and high school level:

- Flashbacks
- Emotional numbing or depression
- Nightmares
- Avoidance or withdrawal
- Peer relationship problems
- Substance abuse or other high-risk behavior

Signs That Additional Help Is Needed

Adults should be particularly alert to any of the following as indicators that trained mental health professional (school psychologist or counselor) should be consulted for intervention and possible referral:

- Severe loss of interest in daily activities (e.g., extracurricular activities and friends)
- Disruption in ability to eat or sleep
- School refusal
- Fear of being alone
- Repeated wish to join the deceased
- Severe drop in school achievement
- Suicidal references or behavior

Risk Factors for Increased Reactions

Some students (and adults) may be a greater risk for grief reactions that require professional intervention. This includes individuals who:

- Were very close to the person(s) who died
- Were present when the person died
- Have suffered a recent loss
- Have experienced a traumatic event
- Are isolated or lack a personal support network
- Suffer from depression, Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, or other mental illness

Keep in mind that groups, particularly adolescents, can experience collective or even vicarious grief. Students may feel grief, anxiety or stress because they see classmates who were directly affected by a loss, even if they didn't personally know the deceased. Additional risk factors include the deceased being popular or well-known, extensive media coverage, a sudden or traumatic death, homicides or suicides.

SUPPORTING GRIEVING CHILDREN AND YOUTH

How adults in a family or school community grieve following a loss will influence how children and youth grieve. When adults are able to talk about the loss, express their feelings, and provide support for children and youth in the aftermath of a loss, they are better able to develop healthy coping strategies. Adults are encouraged to:

- Talk about the loss. This gives children permission to talk about it, too.
- Ask questions to determine how children understand the loss, and gauge their physical and emotional reactions.
- Listen patiently. Remember that each person is unique and will grieve in his or her own way.
- Be prepared to discuss the loss repeatedly. Children should be encouraged to talk about, act out, or express through writing or art the details of the loss as well as their feelings about it, about the deceased person, and about other changes that have occurred in their lives as a result of the loss.
- Give children important facts about the event at an appropriate developmental level. This may include helping children accurately understand what death is. For younger children, this explanation might include helping them to understand that the person's body has stopped working and will never again work.
- Help children understand the death and intervene to correct false perceptions about the cause of the event, ensuring that they do not blame themselves or others for the situation.
- Provide a model of healthy mourning by being open about your own feelings of sadness and grief.
- Create structure and routine for children so they experience predictability and stability.

- Take care of yourself so you can assist the children and adolescents in your care. Prolonged, intense grieving or unhealthy grief reactions (such as substance abuse) will inhibit your ability to provide adequate support.
- Acknowledge that it will take time to mourn and that bereavement is a process that occurs over months and years. Be aware that normal grief reactions often last longer than six months, depending on the type of loss and proximity to the child.
- Take advantage of school and community resources such as counseling, especially if children and youth do not seem to be coping well with grief and loss.

TIPS FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS WITH GRIEVING FRIENDS AND CLASSMATES

Seeing a friend try to cope with a loss may scare or upset children who have had little or no experience with death and grieving. Some suggestions teachers and parents can provide to children and youth to deal with this "secondary" loss:

- Particularly with younger children, it will be important to help clarify their understanding of death. See tips above under "helping children cope."
- Seeing their classmates' reactions to loss may bring about some fears of losing their own parents or siblings. Children need reassurance from caretakers and teachers that their own families are safe. For children who have experienced their own loss (previous death of a parent, grandparent, sibling), observing the grief of a friend can bring back painful memories. These children are at greater risk for developing more serious stress reactions and should be given extra support as needed.
- Children (and many adults) need help in communicating condolence or comfort messages. Provide children with age-appropriate guidance for supporting their peers. Help them decide what to say (e.g., "Steve, I am so sorry about your father. I know you will miss him very much. Let me know if I can help you with your paper route....") and what to expect (see "expressions of grief" above).
- Help children anticipate some changes in friends' behavior. It is important that children understand that their grieving friends may act differently, may withdraw from their friends for a while, might seem angry or very sad, etc., but that this does not mean a lasting change in their relationship.
- Explain to children that their "regular" friendship may be an important source of support for friends and classmates. Even normal social activities such as inviting a friend over to play, going to the park, playing sports, watching a movie, or a trip to the mall may offer a much needed distraction and sense of connection and normalcy.
- Children need to have some options for providing support—it will help them deal with their fears and concerns if they have some concrete actions that they can take to help. Suggest making cards, drawings, helping with chores or homework, etc. Older teens might offer to help the family with some shopping, cleaning, errands, etc., or with babysitting for younger children.
- Encourage children who are worried about a friend to talk to a caring adult. This can help alleviate their own concern or potential sense of responsibility for making their friend feel better. Children may also share important information about a friend who is at risk of more serious grief reactions.
- Parents and teachers need to be alert to children in their care who may be reacting to a friend's loss of a loved one. These children will need some extra support to help them deal with the sense of frustration and helplessness that many people are feeling at this time.

Adapted from "Death and Grief in the Family: Tips for Parents" in *Helping Children at Home and School III*, NASP, 2010 and from materials posted on the NASP website after September 11, 2001.

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DEATH AND GRIEF IN THE FAMILY: TIPS FOR PARENTS

By James Batts, PhD, NCSP
Eastern Kentucky University



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Our children grow up in a culture that avoids expressing grief and tries to deny the inevitability of death. The realization that all life must someday end is one of the most difficult concepts we as adults have to deal with and is one of the most difficult concepts we have to teach our children. Death is all around us, yet as parents we believe that if we do not talk about it with our children death will not touch them.

Children will face many deaths that will have an impact on their daily lives. Some of these deaths may be anticipated and some sudden. Children may have to face the fact that a friend, a sibling, or a parent has died or that they, too, will die. Children will need adult help in understanding what is happening and will typically look to adults as models for how to cope.

Children's Understanding of Death

Preschool children (ages 2–6). Generally around age 4 children have a limited and vague understanding of death. Children of this age generally do not think of death as permanent. They may believe it is reversible and talk of doing things with the person in the future. Preschoolers frequently engage in magical thought and play. They may believe if they pray or wish hard enough, they could bring the dead person to life. A parent may overhear a child tell a friend, "My mommy is not dead. She is visiting Grandma."

Young children may connect events or things together that do not belong together. A child may tell his brother he hates him, and a short time later the brother is struck and killed by a car. The child may not only have guilt for what he said, but feel responsible for causing the death. As parents and caregivers we must disconnect these events in the child's thinking by reassuring the child that the events are not in any way related.

Primary age children (age 6–9). Children at this age have begun to grasp the finality of death, but very often they still engage in magical thinking and maintain the belief that their thoughts and wishes may have the power to undo death. This belief in their power may lead to the idea that they could have prevented the death or they should have been there to protect the person who died. This thinking also is likely to lead to feelings of guilt and responsibility for the person's death.

Intermediate age children (age 9–12). Developmentally, children at this age are reading adventure books, telling ghost stories, and becoming preoccupied with super heroes. They often look on death as some supernatural being that comes and gets you. Even though they think of death as something that happens primarily to old people, they realize it can happen to the young, to their parents, to their loved ones. At this age they may develop fears of their parents dying or have nightmares about the death of a friend or loved one. They may also think people die because of some wrong doing of the dead person or someone around them (death is punishment for bad behavior). Again, this type of thinking can lead to feelings of guilt and remorse.

Adolescents (age 13–18). By the time children reach middle school, they probably understand death as well as adults. They understand it is permanent and happens to everyone eventually. Teens spend much of their time thinking, daydreaming, and philosophizing about death. They are often fascinated with death and fantasize about their own death to the dismay of their parents. They imagine their own funeral, for example, who will come, how badly people will feel, and how people will wish they had been nicer to them when they were alive. Even with this preoccupation with death, they can feel immune to it and engage in death-challenging behaviors such as reckless driving or drinking or taking drugs.

How to Tell a Child of a Death

Every family has to deal with death in its own way depending on the relationship of the individual, cultural traditions, religious beliefs, and the age and developmental level of the child. The following suggestions can guide parents in this difficult task:

- Get to your child quickly, before friends or other relatives try to explain what happened.
- Find a quiet place to tell your child, and do it calmly and gently.
- Start with an introduction to prepare your child for the bad news. Maybe say, "A very sad thing happened. Grandpa has died." If your child is a preschooler, you may need to explain what the word "died" means. "Died" may be defined as "no longer living." Talk to your child about what it means to be alive. "When you're alive you can breathe, walk, talk, see, hear. Grandpa cannot do these things any more."
- Use clear language, such as "dead," "died," "cancer," or "Her heart stopped working." Avoid using confusing and unclear language such as "passed on," "no longer with us," "with the angels," or "gone away." And especially avoid any references to sleeping. Young children will naturally assume that their loved one will eventually wake up.
- Explain the basic facts and allow the details to come later in the form of questions. Allow your child to show strong emotions and say, "Some people cry when they are upset and other people don't show their emotions when they're upset. It does not mean they don't love the person who died."
- Describe what will happen over the next few days and where your child fits into the events. Describe the funeral arrangements, burial, and related customs specific to your family's culture and religion, where you will be, where they will be, and who will be visiting or staying in the house.
- Provide reassurance that life will eventually be more normal again. Explain to your child that he or she will return to school in a few days, that he or she will be able to see friends again. The family will go back to its usual activities as much as possible but without the loved one. Helping children maintain a positive outlook, even in times of pain, will help ensure a health recovery from grief. (For some good tips on building resilience in children, see the American Psychological Association guide in the "Resources" below.)

Children's Reactions to Death

Childhood grief is different from the grief experienced by adults. Adult grief is usually experienced

more immediately, more intensely, and often times more compactly. You may observe some of the following in grieving children:

- They are more capable of putting aside their grief for periods of time. You may see them engage in play a short time after being told about a death as if nothing has happened.
- They tend to grieve over a longer period of time and more sporadically.
- They often will become more dependent and need additional support even with initiating and maintaining routine activities.
- They can have feelings of unreality, as if all this is happening to someone else.
- They may describe themselves as tired and bored and will experience sleep disturbances.
- They may be preoccupied with the dead person; simple events like a Little League game will trigger a memory or feeling of "I wish Grandpa could have been here for my game."
- They may have a difficult time focusing, may become overactive, and have difficulty with school work.
- They may become aggressive, short tempered, and even engage in uncharacteristic destructive behavior.
- They may revert back to a behavior during an earlier developmental period, such as wetting the bed, sucking a thumb, wanting the nightlight on, or sleeping with a transitional object such as a teddy bear. Regression is a common symptom of grief.

Helping Children Cope With Death

- Funerals and memorial services help us accept death and provide the love and support of families and friends. These services may be more important for children than they are for adults. In an inviting way, ask your child if he or she wants to attend the funeral. Do not force your child to attend the funeral if he or she is adamant about not going.
- Talk, listen, and nurture your child. Children can have endless questions and need for reassurance. Be patient and understanding when asked the same questions over and over. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know." Remember that your child will watch your reactions and use your reactions as a model.
- Try to keep your child's routine as normal as possible or at least return to the normal routine as soon as events allow.
- Children need help in expressing their feelings. Encourage your child to draw pictures for the dead

person or talk about the dead person or even write letters.

- Reading books about death can be helpful, but make sure the book conveys the theme or message you want. Different cultural and religious beliefs may conflict with the message and activities described in some books.
- Provide your child opportunities to do something in memory of the person who died: light a candle, plant a tree, make a memory scrapbook, or give a gift in memory of the person who died.

When Parents Should Be Concerned

These are some warning signs that children may need assistance dealing with their grief:

- Refusal to attend school especially out of fear of something happening to their parents or themselves.
- Physical symptoms that linger, even after a visit to the doctor for reassurance that they are fine. Be especially concerned if the physical symptoms seem to be related to identification with the person who died. (for instance, if the person died of a heart attack and the child suffers from unexplained chest pain or the person died of a stroke and the child complains of headaches).
- Fears and anxieties that interfere with normal activities or routines. Give your child a reasonable period to grieve, but if your child continues to exhibit anxieties, then something may be wrong. Be especially concerned if this behavior is observed across different settings such as at school, home, or in the community.
- Depression that remains for a long period. Depression often follows a major loss such as the death of a loved one, loss of a pet, or divorce. Symptoms of depression may include withdrawal, poor concentration, significant lack of energy, disturbed sleep and appetite, overwhelming sadness, and frequent crying. Be concerned if these signs are present almost all day and nearly every day for a 2-week period. Be concerned if your child is more preoccupied with death than you feel is comfortable or normal.

Other Support for Grieving Children

In addition to your friends and family, the following individuals and organizations may be helpful: the clergy, the funeral director, school psychologist or guidance counselor, hospice, local mental health center, local bereavement support groups, and online support groups. Remember that not all help is helpful.

Sometimes the help that is offered does not meet the family's or individual's needs or expectations and therefore a parent should feel comfort contacting other resources. The publications and websites below may offer grieving families information and support.

Resources

- American Psychological Association. (2003). *Resilience for kids and teens: A guide for parents and teachers*. Washington, DC: Author. Available: http://helping.apa.org/resilience/kids_pt.html
- Fitzgerald, H. (1992). *The grieving child: A parent's guide*. New York: Fireside. ISBN: 0-671-76762-3.
- Silverman, P. R. (2000). *Never too young to know: Death in children's lives*. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 0-19-510955-4.
- Wolfelt, A. (1996). *Healing the bereaved child: Grief gardening, growth through grief, and other touchstones for caregivers*. Ft. Collins, CO: Companion. ISBN: 1879651106.
- Worden, J. W. (1996). *Children and grief: When a parent dies*. New York: Guilford. ISBN: 1572301481.

For Children

- Gootman, M. E. (1994). *When a friend dies: A book for teens about grieving and healing*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit. ISBN: 0915793660.
- Greenlee, S. (1992). *When someone dies*. Atlanta: Peachtree (for ages 9–12). ISBN: 1561450448.
- Wolfelt, A. (2001). *Healing your grieving heart for kids*. Ft. Collins, CO: Companion. ISBN: 1879651270.

Websites and Organizations

- America Hospice Foundation—www.americanhospice.org
- American Psychological Association—www.apa.org
- Compassionate Friends—www.compassionatefriends.org
- Griefnet—www.griefnet.org (has an excellent area for children)
- Mister Rogers—www.misterrogers.org (see the booklet, *Grieving for children 4–10 years*)
- National Association of School Psychologists—www.nasponline.org

James Batts, PhD, NCSP, is on the faculty of the School Psychology program at Eastern Kentucky University.

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Helping Children Cope With Loss, Death, and Grief Tips for Teachers and Parents

Schools and communities around the country will be impacted by the loss of life associated with the war in Iraq. The effects may be significant for some people because of their emotional closeness to the war and/or their concern over terrorism. How school personnel handle the resulting distress can help shape the immediate and longer-term grieving process for students, staff, and families. Children, in particular, will need the love and support of their teachers and parents to cope with their loss and reach constructive grief resolution.

Expressions of Grief

Talking to children about death must be geared to their developmental level, respectful of their cultural norms, and sensitive to their capacity to understand the situation. Children will be aware of the reactions of significant adults as they interpret and react to information about death and tragedy. In fact, for primary grade children adult reactions will play an especially important role in shaping their perceptions of the situation. The range of reactions that children display in response to the death of significant others may include:

- ***Emotional shock*** and at times an apparent lack of feelings, which serve to help the child detach from the pain of the moment;
- ***Regressive (immature) behaviors***, such as needing to be rocked or held, difficulty separating from parents or significant others, needing to sleep in parent's bed or an apparent difficulty completing tasks well within the child's ability level;
- ***Explosive emotions and acting out behavior*** that reflect the child's internal feelings of anger, terror, frustration and helplessness. Acting out may reflect insecurity and a way to seek control over a situation for which they have little or no control;
- ***Asking the same questions over and over***, not because they do not understand the facts, but rather because the information is so hard to believe or accept. Repeated questions can help listeners determine if the child is responding to misinformation or the real trauma of the event.

Helping Children Cope

The following tips will help teachers, parents, and other caregivers support children who have experienced the loss of parents, friends, or loved ones. Some of these recommendations come from Dr. Alan Wolfelt, Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Fort Collins, Colorado.

- ***Allow children to be the teachers about their grief experiences***: Give children the opportunity to tell their story and be a good listener.
- ***Don't assume that every child in a certain age group understands death in the same way or with the same feelings***: All children are different and their view of the world is unique and shaped by different experiences. (Developmental information is provided below.)
- ***Grieving is a process, not an event***: Parents and schools need to allow adequate time for each child to grieve in the manner that works for that child. Pressing children to resume "normal" activities without the chance to deal with their emotional pain may prompt additional problems or negative reactions.

- ***Don't lie or tell half-truths to children about the tragic event:*** Children are often bright and sensitive. They will see through false information and wonder why you do not trust them with the truth. Lies do not help the child through the healing process or help develop effective coping strategies for life's future tragedies or losses.
- ***Help all children, regardless of age, to understand loss and death:*** Give the child information at the level that he/she can understand. Allow the child to guide adults as to the need for more information or clarification of the information presented. Loss and death are both part of the cycle of life that children need to understand.
- ***Encourage children to ask questions about loss and death:*** Adults need to be less anxious about not knowing all the answers. Treat questions with respect and a willingness to help the child find his or her own answers.
- ***Don't assume that children always grieve in an orderly or predictable way:*** We all grieve in different ways and there is no one "correct" way for people to move through the grieving process.
- ***Let children know that you really want to understand what they are feeling or what they need:*** Sometimes children are upset but they cannot tell you what will be helpful. Giving them the time and encouragement to share their feelings with you may enable them to sort out their feelings.
- ***Children will need long-lasting support:*** The more losses the child or adolescent suffers, the more difficult it will be to recover. This is especially true if they have lost a parent who was their major source of support. Try to develop multiple supports for children who suffer significant losses.
- ***Keep in mind that grief work is hard:*** It is hard work for adults and hard for children as well.
- ***Understand that grief work is complicated:*** Deaths that result from a terrorist act or war can bring forth many issues that are difficult, if not impossible, to comprehend. Grieving may also be complicated by a need for vengeance or justice and by the lack of resolution of the current situation: the conflict may continue and the nation may still feel at risk. The sudden or violent nature of the death or the fact that some individuals may be considered missing rather than dead can further complicate the grieving process.
- ***Be aware of your own need to grieve:*** Focusing on the children in your care is important, but not at the expense of your emotional needs. Adults who have lost a loved one will be far more able to help children work through their grief if they get help themselves. For some families, it may be important to seek family grief counseling, as well as individual sources of support.

Developmental Phases in Understanding Death

It is important to recognize that all children are unique in their understanding of death and dying. This understanding depends on their developmental level, cognitive skills, personality characteristics, religious or spiritual beliefs, teachings by parents and significant others, input from the media, and previous experiences with death. Nonetheless, there are some general considerations that will be helpful in understanding how children and adolescents experience and deal with death.

- ***Infants and Toddlers:*** The youngest children may perceive that adults are sad, but have no real understanding of the meaning or significance of death.
- ***Preschoolers:*** Young children may deny death as a formal event and may see death as reversible. They may interpret death as a separation, not a permanent condition. Preschool and even early elementary children may link certain events and magical thinking with the causes of death. For instance, as a result of the World Trade Center disaster, some children may imagine that going into tall buildings may cause someone's death.

- **Early Elementary School:** Children at this age (approximately 5-9) start to comprehend the finality of death. They begin to understand that certain circumstances may result in death. They can see that, if large planes crash into buildings, people in the planes and buildings will be killed. In case of war images, young children may not be able to differentiate between what they see on television, and what might happen in their own neighborhood. However, they may over-generalize, particularly at ages 5-6—if jet planes don't fly, then people don't die. At this age, death is perceived as something that happens to others, not to oneself or one's family.
- **Middle School:** Children at this level have the cognitive understanding to comprehend death as a final event that results in the cessation of all bodily functions. They may not fully grasp the abstract concepts discussed by adults or on the TV news but are likely to be guided in their thinking by a concrete understanding of justice. They may experience a variety of feelings and emotions, and their expressions may include acting out or self-injurious behaviors as a means of coping with their anger, vengeance and despair.
- **High School:** Most teens will fully grasp the meaning of death in circumstances such as an automobile accident, illness and even the World Trade Center or Pentagon disasters. They may seek out friends and family for comfort or they may withdraw to deal with their grief. Teens (as well as some younger children) with a history of depression, suicidal behavior and chemical dependency are at particular risk for prolonged and serious grief reactions and may need more careful attention from home and school during these difficult times.

Tips for Children and Teens with Grieving Friends and Classmates

Seeing a friend try to cope with a loss may scare or upset children who have had little or no experience with death and grieving. Following are some suggestions teachers and parents can provide to children and youth to deal with this “secondary” loss.

- Particularly with younger children, it will be important to help clarify their understanding of death. See tips above under “helping children cope.”
- Seeing their classmates' reactions to loss may bring about some fears of losing their own parents or siblings, particularly for students who have family in the military or other risk related professions. Children need reassurance from caregivers and teachers that their own families are safe. For children who have experienced their own loss (previous death of a parent, grandparent, sibling), observing the grief of a friend can bring back painful memories. These children are at greater risk for developing more serious stress reactions and should be given extra support as needed.
- Children (and many adults) need help in communicating condolence or comfort messages. Provide children with age-appropriate guidance for supporting their peers. Help them decide what to say (e.g., “Steve, I am so sorry about your father. I know you will miss him very much. Let me know if I can help you with your paper route....”) and what to expect (see “expressions of grief” above).
- Help children anticipate some changes in friends' behavior. It is important that children understand that their grieving friends may act differently, may withdraw from their friends for a while, might seem angry or very sad, etc., but that this does not mean a lasting change in their relationship.
- Explain to children that their “regular” friendship may be an important source of support for friends and classmates. Even normal social activities such as inviting a friend over to play, going to the park, playing sports, watching a movie, or a trip to the mall may offer a much needed distraction and sense of connection and normalcy.
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- Encourage children who are worried about a friend to talk to a caring adult. This can help alleviate their own concern or potential sense of responsibility for making their friend feel better. Children may also share important information about a friend who is at risk of more serious grief reactions.
- Parents and teachers need to be alert to children in their care who may be reacting to a friend's loss of a loved one. These children will need some extra support to help them deal with the sense of frustration and helplessness that many people are feeling at this time.

Resources for Grieving and Traumatized Children

At times of severe stress, such as the trauma of war or terrorist attacks, both children and adults need extra support. Children who are physically and emotionally closest to this tragedy may very well experience the most dramatic feelings of fear, anxiety and loss. They may have personally lost a loved one or know of friends and schoolmates who have been devastated by these treacherous acts. Adults need to carefully observe these children for signs of traumatic stress, depression or even suicidal thinking, and seek professional help when necessary.

Resources to help you identify symptoms of severe stress and grief reactions are available at the National Association of School Psychologists' website—www.nasponline.org. See also:

For Caregivers

- Deaton, R.L. & Berkan, W.A. (1995). *Planning and managing death issues in the schools: A handbook*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group.
- Mister Rogers Website: www.misterrogers.org (see booklet on Grieving for children 4-10 years)
- Webb, N.B. (1993). *Helping bereaved children: A handbook for practitioners*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Wolfelt, A. (1983). *Helping children cope with grief*. Bristol, PA: Accelerated Development.
- Wolfelt, A. (1997). *Healing the bereaved child: Grief gardening, growth through grief and other touchstones for caregivers*. Ft. Collins, CO: Companion.
- Worden, J.W. (1996). *Children and grief: When a parent dies*. New York: Guilford Press
- Helping Children Cope With Death, The Dougy Center for Grieving Children, www.dougy.org.

For Children

- Gootman, M.E. (1994). *When a friend dies: A book for teens about grieving and healing*. Minneapolis: Free Spirit Publishing.
- Greenlee, S. (1992). *When someone dies*. Atlanta: Peachtree Publishing. (Ages 9-12).
- Wolfelt, A. (2001). *Healing your grieving heart for kids*. Ft. Collins, CO: Companion. (See also similar titles for teens and adults)

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