

Things that can help you :

Sleep, eat well, and drink water. Take care of your body.

Staying physically active, playing sports and exercising can help.

Express your feelings. If you are angry: punch pillows, throw or kick balls, pound clay, rip up paper, go to a safe place and scream.

If you are feeling sad: have a special place to go, take a walk, talk with a friend or an adult. Reading a favorite book or listening to music can also help.

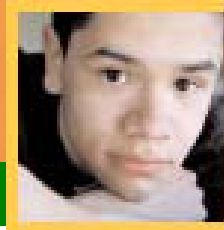
Writing or drawing in a journal (or workbook). You might want to write a letter to your parent who died. This can be a way to say things you wanted to tell them.

Things that won't help:

- Abusing alcohol or drugs to numb your pain,
- Making risky choices,
- Fighting,
- Withdrawing from friends and social activities,
- Sleeping too little or too much.

If you find that you are having trouble with any of these, please reach out to a trusted adult. It can make a difference in your life.

One more thought There will be many up and down days while you grieve. Over time your feelings will be less intense. You won't ever forget or stop loving your parent. Things will not feel so terrible forever. Don't feel guilty about having some fun while you are grieving. Your parent who died would want you to enjoy life and have some happiness. Remember to take good and gentle care of yourself.



TEENS



We are sorry that your parent died. This is a sad and upsetting time for you and your family. All the feelings and experiences you are having and will have are part of grieving. Your grief is very personal. No two people will have the exact same experience.

That is what makes this hard.

You might think that because you are older, you have to take on more adult responsibilities. It isn't your job to take the place of your parent. You still need to have time to be with your friends.

You will have lots of different feelings. Talk and share these with others. It will take lots of time, but you and your family will get through this time together.





Feelings

Grief is the reaction you have when someone you love dies or when you experience a loss. It is made up of emotions, physical feelings, and your thoughts and memories. Sometimes these feelings can be overwhelming or frightening because they are intense. Often people feel numb, shocked, sad, angry, sick, alone, worried or irritated.



Common Questions Teens Have

It is ok for you to ask your family any question you have. No question is silly or dumb. Sometimes even adults don't know all the answers.
What caused your parent's death?

Knowing what caused the death might answer some questions you have. But, it won't really explain why this had to happen to you and your family.

Is it my fault? ("If-Only" thinking.)

You didn't do anything to make this happen. You might think that if you had said something or acted different then your parent would not have died. This is called "If-Only" thinking. Many adults can have these thoughts too. Thoughts and wishes do not cause someone to die. You did not cause your parent's death. This is not your fault.

Will other people I love die too? When will I die?

When someone in your family dies, it is common to worry about this. Some teens worry that their other parent will die. It is very unusual for this to happen. Talk to your parent about your concerns. You might be worried that you will die, too. It is rare for a young person to die, especially one who is healthy.

Who is going to take care of me?

Can I still have my hopes and dreams for the future?

Your family and people who love you will continue to take care of you. Some teens worry they won't be able to go away to college, travel, or get a job they want to have. Others might worry about money. If you have specific worries or questions, make sure you ask a loved one or family about these.

I don't want to be different from my friends. Sometimes your friends may act differently toward you because they don't know what to say. Just being together and hanging out can help make you feel better. It can also help to talk with other teens who have suffered a similar loss. There may be teens in your school or your community who had a parent die.

Your need for privacy. Grief is very personal. You might want more private time. Having adults check in on how you are doing might be annoying. Know that they are just trying to say they care about you.



When you are grieving it is normal to have:

Trouble sleeping You might have a hard time falling asleep or waking up in the morning. You might wake up in the middle of the night. Grief can make you very tired.

Dreams Many teens will have dreams about the parent who has died. Sometimes these can be comforting or funny. Some teens might have nightmares or more troubling dreams. Talking about your dreams can help you feel better.

Feeling Bursts You might find that you have feelings come from "out of the blue." You can hear a song and feel like crying. You can get really angry over something that seems like it isn't that big of a deal. This is normal.

Trouble Concentrating It might be harder to do school work or pay attention. You might feel shocked or numb for a while.

Fears and worries It is normal to have more fears and worries after a parent dies. This will get better over time.

Physical feelings When you grieve you can have different bodily responses. Headaches, stomachaches, feeling anxious, having trouble sleeping, feeling tired, catching more colds, and weight gain or loss are all common. If these symptoms last for a long time, or don't feel like they are improving, speak with your doctor.