



## **Parenting While Grieving**

- 1. Let your child see you grieve.** Allow your child to see you cry and/or show your emotions of sadness, fear, anger, etc... They need to see adults model a natural and normal response to death. It will also give your child the opportunity to show you compassion and offer support.
- 2. Try to maintain the child's normal routine as much as possible.** The structure of each day will help you and your child feel some level of control. It will also be more calming to know what the expectation is for the day in a world that may now feel very chaotic and scary.
- 3. Cherish the memories.** Continue to talk about the loved one who died and share stories about the life that was lost. Be careful to not put the loved one on a pedestal – all humans have their good qualities and their not so good qualities.
- 4. Build a support network for your child.** Establish different support systems for your child so you are not the only one helping your child cope with his/her grief. Try to find various outlets and/or activities (examples - music therapy, counseling, sports, etc...) that your child can release some of their feelings in a positive manner.
- 5. Invest in your own emotional needs.** Take time to find your own ways to release the various emotions of grieving plus being a parent. Some ideas are finding a grief counselor, joining a support group, journaling, and exercising; basically whatever helps you clear your mind and release stress will be helpful.
- 6. Schedule adult time for yourself.** Arrange to spend time with adults, even if it is for short periods of time. It allows you to have some adult conversation and helps you to not isolate too much. Be sure to take care of yourself and your own needs – it will also help you to be a better parent.
- 7. Be open to creating and experiencing a new normal.** Routine is important initially, but with time you will also find new ways of doing things and new experiences. Together you and your child can continue to learn and grow and incorporate old traditions with new ones of your own.



**8. Don't be so hard on yourself.** You do not have to be perfect. Being there for your child is the biggest thing you can do. Let the smaller things go. Allow yourself and your children days of rest. If you're feeling overwhelmed, plan a "pajama/video day" and relax.

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