

## Helping Students Who Are Experiencing Crisis Tips for Caregivers

1. Keep your child informed and updated. Children need to feel involved and in control as much as possible.
  2. Watch for signs of distress, loss of appetite, aggression, acting out, being withdrawn, changes in sleep, and other behavior changes which may indicate problems.
  3. Send your child to school if possible. The stability and routine of a familiar situation will help young people feel more secure.
  4. Remember that everyone reacts to stress and/or grief in different ways. There is no one way to act in a crisis situation.
  5. Allow children the opportunity to express feelings. It is important to validate these feelings.
  6. A good diet and plenty of exercise are important for children who are under stress. Encourage your child to eat well and get plenty of exercise.
  7. Be honest about your own concerns, but stress yours and your child's ability to cope with the situation.
  8. Respect a child's need to grieve.
  9. Provide somewhere private and quiet for your child to go.
  10. Be available to listen to your child.
  11. Remember to take care of yourself.
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## How to Help a Young Person Experiencing Grief

- Use the terms "died/dead/death" rather than phrases like "passed away" or "taken from us." Give an honest explanation for the person's death, avoiding clichés or easy answers. Straightforward, gentle use of the words helps a person confront the reality of death.
- Explain and accept that everyone has different reactions to death at different times. The reaction might not hit until the funeral or weeks later.
- Reassure the young person that his/her grief feelings are normal. There is no "right" way to react to a loss. Give permission to cry. Let them know it's okay not to cry if the young person does not typically react that way.
- Permit or encourage the young person to talk about a person who has died, both at the moment of loss, and especially after the funeral. This is a vital part of the healing process. It is best not to protect the person from this first step of acceptance and healing.

Do not attempt to minimize the loss or take the pain away. Phrases like "Don't worry, it will be okay," "he/she had a good life," or "he/she is out of pain," are not helpful. Grief is painful. There must be pain before there can be acceptance and healing. It is very difficult to do but most helpful to acknowledge the person's pain and permit them to live with it without trying to take it away or make it 'better'.