

## **Greif and Loss**

- Take the opportunity to tell someone what happened and how you feel.
- Work with teacher or school counselor to make modifications and accommodations to schoolwork. This will help you voice what you need and how you are feeling. Grieving is a process. Adults should be patient and give you adequate time to resume a normal workflow. Putting too much pressure on yourself too quickly may result in an emotional breakdown or school avoidance.
- Ask questions knowing the truth will help you begin to heal because you have a complete understanding of events. Often if things are not discussed, s may will create their own, inaccurate interpretations of events.
- Understand that we all grieve differently. There is no right or wrong way to do it. There may be a great deal of anger, the need for vengeance, and an ongoing sense of worry for. Always remember that it is hard work for anyone to grieve. Be around those who are helpful in supporting them in the grieving process.
- Encourage “active coping” techniques, which refers to taking action to seek out help when one is hurting. Be straightforward with your that you really want to understand what they need and how they are feeling. Give them time and encouragement since they often may not be able to express themselves or let you know what they need right away.
- Connect them with a place to go outside the classroom if they become upset. This may be the school psychologist or counselor’s office, the librarian, whoever seems like they will be most helpful. Let them know they are free to leave the class whenever they feel like they need space.
- Make sure you manage your own grief appropriately. The death of a, teacher, or staff member can affect you as well as yours. Keep in mind that you need to take care of yourself as well, and if you need to miss school or take time to get help yourself, you will be much more effective at helping yours in the long run. Remember that they are learning from your response. It is perfectly appropriate to cry softly with your s or express your sadness, but if you become hysterical it may be more upsetting for them. Go through your own process but make sure to take time away if you are not okay.

### **How to Encourage Others to Help a Grieving Friend?**

- Make sure to clarify their understanding of the event in the life of their friend.
- Reassure them that their own families are safe.
- Be aware that children that have experienced loss may be triggered by their friend’s loss; they may need support in coping with painful memories.

- Talk to s about how to give condolences to their friend. Tell them what to say and what not to say. Help them make cards or write letters.
- Prepare children that their friend may act differently for a while.
- Encourage them to play with their grieving friend, and that doing fun things after school may be a welcome distraction.

Dealing with death is a difficult, but inevitable part of being a teacher. You are in a position to be of immense help to your class and teaching them healthy coping skills.

Resource: <http://grievingstudents.org>