

Coping with Grief..

Okay, so in the last booklet we covered what we think you should know about grief, but now what do you do with it?

First it's important to figure out what kind of coping skills will work for *you*. You've no doubt heard from other people telling you what you should do and what has worked for them. Sure they might mean well but just because it worked for them doesn't mean it will for you. Start by thinking about what speaks to who you are as a person and what you like to do.



Here are a few to think about...

Are you creative or like to build things?

Are there any physical activities you enjoy or want to try?

Do you sing or play a musical instrument?

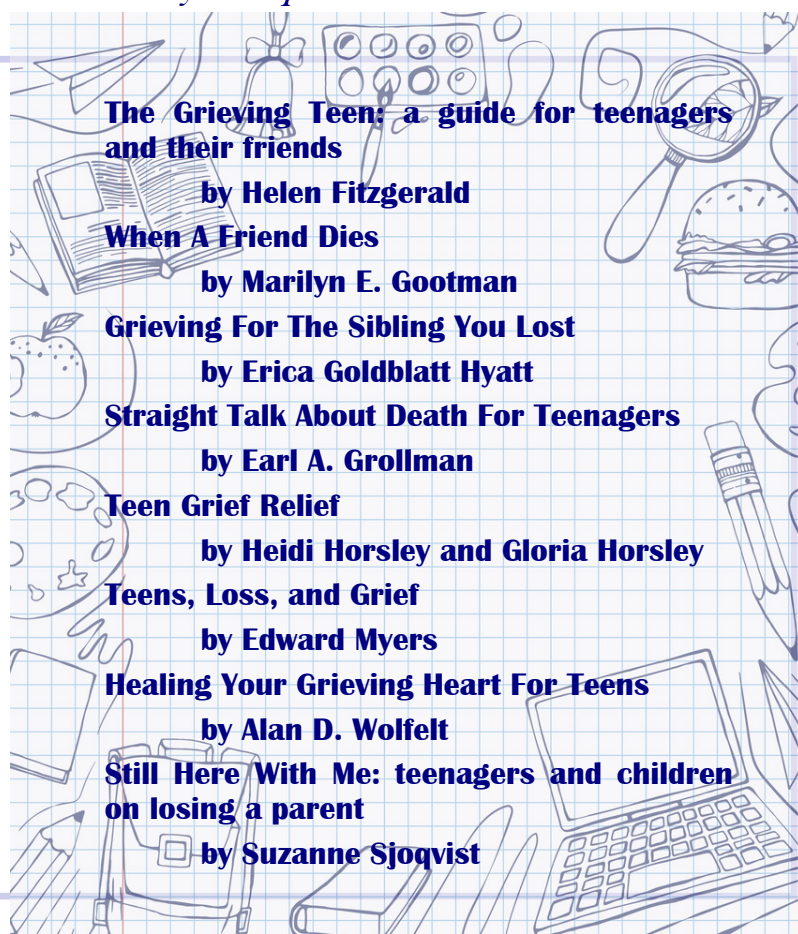
Do you enjoy spending time outside or do you prefer being inside?

Do you like being around a lot of people or prefer small groups of people?

Are online resources more your speed?

Books on Teen Grief

I know...you might not really be into reading books for fun but hear us out on this one. Books can be very helpful in validating and normalizing your grief experience. You may find yourself not wanting to talk to your friends because they don't understand or you don't want them feeling sorry for you. Maybe you don't want to talk to your family because you don't want to upset them or burden them with your feelings (which totally won't but that is pretty common worry). Reading a book that you can relate to can help you feel more understood and less alone so do us a favor and at least think about it.



The Grieving Teen: a guide for teenagers and their friends

by Helen Fitzgerald

When A Friend Dies

by Marilyn E. Gootman

Grieving For The Sibling You Lost

by Erica Goldblatt Hyatt

Straight Talk About Death For Teenagers

by Earl A. Grollman

Teen Grief Relief

by Heidi Horsley and Gloria Horsley

Teens, Loss, and Grief

by Edward Myers

Healing Your Grieving Heart For Teens

by Alan D. Wolfelt

Still Here With Me: teenagers and children on losing a parent

by Suzanne Sjoqvist

Getting Creative!!

Getting down on paper all that is swirling around inside you is a great way to express yourself and get those thoughts and feelings out.

♥ Consider writing poems, songs, short-stories, or whatever feels helpful to you.

♥ Try jotting down short journal entries each day on how you are doing. This can help you see the progress of your feelings as time passes. An example of this could be... "Monday - I feel terrible. Didn't want to get out of bed but I did." "Tuesday - today was okay. Didn't want to throat punch anyone. AND We had my favorite—walking tacos for lunch!"



♥ Make lists instead of writing a paragraph if that overwhelms you.

♥ Use colored pencils or markers for some color in your journal.

♥ Write a 6 word story about your grief (more can be found at whatsyourgrief.com).

♥ Make a collage of quotes you like. Or song lyrics that speak to you.

♥ Write down specific memories that you don't want to forget.

♥ What other creative outlets do you like? Making crafts? Woodworking? Painting? When you make something in honor of your person it becomes a beautiful keepsake that you can treasure.

♥ Write a letter to the person who died or write a letter from their perspective to you.

What do you wish you could tell them?

What questions would you ask them?

What do you think they would want you to know?

What has been the hardest thing without them?

"If you don't let it out, the grief becomes a scream trapped inside your soul, a constant cry in the dark, a sob you can never release. So scream, shout, cry, the way the sky does with thunder and lightning and rain...for it knows it is being cleansed, it knows that its storm is the only way to release the pain."

- Nikita Gill

Grief comes with some pretty BIG emotions and a great way to get those BIG emotions out is through physical activity!

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



So tell Workout Cat...

what physical activities do you enjoy?

Sports you like to play _____

Do you like to dance? Take a class, find a YouTube video or put on some jams and dance in your room!

Do you enjoy being outside? Go for a walk or a run!

Do you like riding a bike, skateboard, or dirt bike? Go for a ride!

Think about what you like to do to get your body moving and do it! These activities help you burn off that energy, get those feelings out of your body and can help you sleep better!

Honoring, Rituals and Memorials

Honoring our loved ones after they have died is a very healthy way to cope with grief. One extremely important mode of grief expression for many teens is honoring our loved ones through visible memorials; things like...

Posters Wrist bands
Items left at the place of death or interment
Social media pages Murals
T-shirts/sweatshirts

There's research showing how personal rituals are helpful to those that are grieving and can be just about anything!

What are some you've done?

These can also be a part of a larger ritual which is another important way we honor our loved ones that have died. Rituals help us to express our grief in a meaningful way.

Rituals don't have to be big declarations or done in a certain time frame (so if you didn't get to be a part of the funeral you can still DO something!). They can be something as simple as lighting a candle. When we do that as a part of a special time (say an anniversary or birthday) in a special way (saying "I light this candle in honor of..." and share a memory) it becomes something more, something *special*. These personal rituals are powerful because they are meaningful to you and the relationship you had with the person that died.

Thinking about the rituals you've already done...are there ones you want to continue to do?

Ideas you have for new ones?

What about rituals for upcoming special days?

Are there other people you want to include in your rituals or do you want it just for you?



Music

Music is a powerful form of communicating and helping to process through our feelings. Not only can music be an excellent way to bring feelings and memories to the surface, but it also provides a way to relax and change our mood. Think about songs that remind you of your special person. What was their favorite song or type of music?

What is your “grief playlist”?

While this booklet ends here, our grief does not. The truth of the matter is that grief will last as long as love does; FOREVER. There will always be a piece of our heart that misses our person no matter how much time has gone by. There will always be that twinge of bittersweet pain when we hear their favorite song or their name. There will always be the things you want to share with them and that you wish they could be around for.

But there WILL come a day when all this will suck a little less...and a little less...and a little less. The day will come when you will be able to remember your person with both tears **AND** with smiles; when your good days out-number the bad. This doesn't mean you don't still love your person, it simply means that you have integrated this earthshattering loss into your new life. It doesn't mean you have “moved on” but rather you are moving *forward* with them and continuing to live even though they have died. Which really deserves an award or medal of bravery or something! With grief, there will always be times when things feel heavy again (especially around special days like birthdays, anniversaries, etc.). So treat yourself with kindness when you find yourself in those hard times and know that you have what it takes to handle whatever grief throws your way. You have survived the unimaginable. **And here you are. Still going, still breathing, still alive and we're so proud of you for that!**

For more information about anything listed in this booklet or for additional support services contact Hamilton's Academy of Grief & Loss

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♥ Follow us on Instagram at *HFHAcademy*

♥ Call us: (515) 697-3666

♥ Email: *HFHAcademy@HamiltonsFuneralHome.com*