

Ways Teens Can Manage Stress and Grief Reactions

- ❖ Let others help you. Talk about your thoughts and feelings as often as you feel the need. Contact friends, family, teachers, counselors or other adults who are willing to listen to you. Repeatedly talking about the event and your reactions is part of the healing process.
- ❖ Some teens find that journaling or drawing is helpful. Consider writing a note or letter to family of the person who died.
- ❖ As much as possible, spend time with people who have a positive influence on you. Avoid involving yourself in activities that could add to your problems.
- ❖ Recognize that stress and grief often trigger a wide range of feelings. Even though your feelings and reactions may seem very different from those of your peers, feelings are all common reactions to an uncommon event.
- ❖ There is a temptation when the stress level is high to try to numb the feelings with alcohol and drugs. Substance abuse complicates the problems, rather than relieving them.
- ❖ Make a special effort to take care of yourself during this stressful time. Attempt to get some extra sleep, eat nutritious foods and get some exercise -- even if it is just walking the dog.
- ❖ Getting into a "normal" school/family/work routine may be reassuring and helpful.
- ❖ Provide some balance to the negative things that have gone on by doing something special or fun for yourself. Think about something that makes you feel good and make it happen – like go to a movie, shoot some hoops, listen to music, call an old friend, work on a hobby, etc.
- ❖ Laughter is good medicine. Watch a funny movie or play a silly game with younger children to lighten your spirits.
- ❖ Do something special or fun with your family. They may be concerned about you and want to spend more time with you.
- ❖ Don't make unreasonable demands on yourself. Allow yourself time to feel better. Give yourself permission to slow down. Give yourself permission to be distracted and make mistakes.

Above all, realize that what you are experiencing is normal for a traumatic situation. Be understanding of yourself and others.