

ESPECIALLY FOR TEENS

(This list developed by teens in Bereavement Support Program, Caledonia Health Care.)

Things that helped me with my grief

- being acknowledged (knowing people were thinking of me)
- working (it was often a relief to stay busy)
- helping (helping others made me feel better)
- sharing (when friends told me of similar losses, I felt less alone)
- talking (I was grateful for friends who were willing to listen)
- crying (it helped loosen up the knots inside me and brought relief)
- laughing (I learned it was OK to laugh and have a good time, too)
- hugging (it often meant more than words could say)
- being with my friends (I like sometimes doing the old, "normal" stuff and getting away from home)
- being alone (sometimes that's what I wanted most -- there aren't any rules for grief)

Things that hurt

- being avoided (people didn't know what to say or do)
- being pushed to talk (sometimes I didn't feel like talking or didn't like people being nosy)
- feeling different (people whispered about me, looked at me. Sometimes I just wanted to forget what had happened and feel normal again)
- being offered a replacement (like people saying I should get another dog or that my mother should have another baby)
- not being asked (it hurt when people asked my friends what happened because they were afraid to ask me)
- being told how to feel ("you shouldn't cry", "don't be angry", "you should be over this by now", "everyone feels that way")

Ways you can express sympathy

- say "I'm sorry this happened to you." (It is direct and simple)
- give a hug, take some flowers, bake some cookies, lend a teddy bear
- listen
- don't be afraid to mention the dead person's name
- remember to keep in touch
- find out if s/he wants to do "routine" activities or wants a break
- don't act embarrassed if a grieving friend cries OR laughs... just BE there!

Things that might be a support to grieving teenagers:

- keeping a journal or diary.
- joining a support group of peers who are also grieving.
- writing letters of "regrets and appreciations" to the one who has died.