

Ways to Help a Grieving Friend, Teammate, or Classmate

IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY OR DO,
be honest with your friend and tell them that. Ask them how you can best support and help them; **then... just listen.**

THINGS TO AVOID...

- ✗ Don't say that you had a pet die, it's NOT the same.
- ✗ DON'T make suicide or death jokes in front of a grieving child or teen. Try not to say, "I'm so mad at my mom/dad/brother/sister I could kill them", or "this course is so hard I want to kill myself".
- ✗ When you talk about your parent/sibling in front of a grieving friend, try NOT to talk about how angry and annoyed they make you. Your friend would give anything to have their parent or sibling back in their life to annoy them.

INSTEAD SAY THIS...

- ✓ Instead of saying "I'm sorry", try saying "it's awful that your mom/dad/brother/-sister died. I'm here for you if you ever want to talk".
- ✓ Your friend may be triggered by small things that you are unaware of. Suddenly you notice they've gone silent or gotten angry or started crying or left the room. There could have been a sound or smell or anything that reminded them of the person who died, and it hit them off guard. You can say, "if you want to talk about it I'm here to listen".

AND WHAT CAN I DO?

- If you knew the person who died, talk to your friend about them. They don't want to forget their parent or sibling and they want others to remember them too. Grieving children and teens want to hear stories about the person who died even if it's simply a few sentences about a time their parent/sibling talked to you or helped you or made you laugh.
- Go to the funeral or memorial service; you may never know how important it is to your friend that you and many others came to honour and remember their loved one.
- Remind your friend that you are always here to listen if they want to talk about the person who died, or how they are feeling or anything else. And only say it, if you really mean it.
- Treat them like you've always treated them, they don't want to be known as "the kid whose Mom died".
- Remember that your friend won't be sad all the time; they still want to have fun, play, hang out, and laugh.