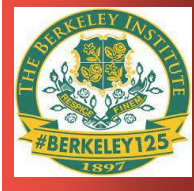


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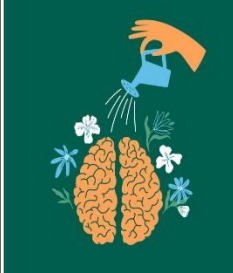
December 2023 issue:

- Grief during adolescence
- How to support grieving adolescents
- Local community mental health resources



A monthly newsletter for Berkeley Institute parents promoting Wellness & Mental Health

Healthy Mind



What can help my child with grief as Christmas approaches?

The festive season: (Christmas, Kwanzaa, Hanukkah) can be very triggering for young people if they have lost a loved one or experienced another type of loss, even if it occurred years ago. Here are things that help:

- Rest. Grief is extremely taxing on the body & mind and requires energy to manage the stress
- Being around other grieving young people who are the same age as your child
- Being creative in honoring the deceased such as drawing, journaling, coloring, or collecting photos & things the person loved
- Writing a visual list of support systems: family members, friends, pets, or music
- Taking walks in nature
- Having them identify a safe place to go to when they need to cry or have alone time
- Keeping their routine consistent yet flexible
- Offering options for support and letting them decide which ones they want to try
- Acknowledging the anniversary of the loss and allowing for moments of sadness & low mood
- Having them talk to a professional therapist if necessary



Grief During Adolescence

Today's youth live in a world where death is all around them. It is spoken about on social media platforms, it is in the lyrics of the music they listen to, and in the movies and shows they watch. Adolescents may grieve the death of a family member, friend, acquaintance, or the loss of a beloved pet. However, grief for them does not only mean death, but can also include the trauma of their parents' divorce, the loss of a house, moving countries or the end of a friendship or romantic relationship. Adolescent development in a teenager's life consists of numerous physical and emotional changes and adding grief to these stressors brings an even greater burden. Teenagers who are grieving can feel completely overwhelmed by powerful emotions and feelings that are confusing to them and which

they don't expect to appear after a loss. For example, denial, shock, anger, fatigue, and sadness are all common. Many young people find it easier to confide in friends rather than family after a death or loss. This can feel hurtful and disappointing for adults who want to be there to comfort their children and offer support, which is subsequently rejected. Young people sometimes try to protect their parents by hiding their pain from them to avoid causing them any undue distress. If your child declines your help, let them know that you will always be present to listen to them when they feel the time is right. This will take the pressure off of a bereaved teenager and make them more likely to accept support in the months after a heavy loss. It is very important for parents to remember that grief is not a linear

process and one child's way of grieving will not be the same as another's. No one can tell your child how to grieve. Grief also needs to be expressed, whether that's through tears, anger, exercise, sadness, or simply being silent. Avoid telling your child that grief ends at a certain point in time, because the fact is, it does not. It is an eternal process; however, it will feel different a year, 5 years, and 10 years from the date of the loss.

I wish you all a safe, peaceful, and restful Christmas / Kwanzaa / Hanukkah holiday and if you or your child are grieving at this time, may you find solace in family, friends, and community resources to help support you.

References:

Child Bereavement U.K. (2023 December 12)
"Understanding Grieving Teenagers."
<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/information-understanding-grieving-teenagers>

What community & online resources can I use to help my child with grief?

❖ **The Family Center** – Free mental health programs, individual therapy, groups for youth, & family counseling. www.tfc.bm Call 232-1116 or e-mail: info@tfc.bm



❖ **Employee Assistance Program** (for government employees) - Free individual counseling for students and their families www.eap.bm Call 292-9000



❖ **Hope Again** – Website for young people who are grieving: <https://www.hopeagain.org.uk/>

❖ **Gina Spence Productions Grief & Loss Therapeutic Services** – Free grief support to community members in need. Call 296-0016 or email: info@ginaspenceproductions.com Website: www.ginaspenceproductions.com



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