



/ RECOGNIZE

There is no right or wrong way to grieve. It can look a lot of ways, like:

- shock & disbelief
- anger & sadness
 - asking questions like 'What if...?'
- guilt
 - Feeling alone, like nobody understands
 - Crying or being very quiet
 - Sleeping a lot or not at all

Remember there is no set pattern for grief & for many teens, this may be a first experience, meaning they'll have no frame of reference for what seems 'right' or 'appropriate'

/// RESPOND

- Help teens manage their emotions with coping skills like deep breathing, journaling, drawing, or exercise
- Ensure you aren't telling them how to 'feel' or express their grief; their emotions need to come from them
 - Let teens know they're allowed to be happy—even though this is a hard time
 - Let them know they have a right to be angry, and be sure that they don't turn the anger inward or outward but work through it instead.
 - Help them express "if only" thoughts.
- Make sure they know that this loss is not their responsibility
 - Watch for destructive coping mechanisms like stopping or overeating and not sleeping
 - Be there for the long haul, and/or connect them with other help—and make sure you stick it out.
 - Help them feel 'normal' by not changing your behaviour toward them

/// REMEMBER

- God's word tells us all sorts of things about grief and pain. Encouraging teens to memorize God's word is a really effective tool. It can become a really effective mantra that bring comfort in hard moments.
- It's important for teens to know they are not alone in the middle of their grief. Show them God's promise to never leave them or forsake them found in Deuteronomy 31:6

//// RESOURCES

There are a number of websites that can give you further insights into helping teens in grief. The following web pages can help you think through things more:

<http://www.whatsyourgrief.com/helping-a-teenager-deal-with-grief-2/>

<https://www.hospicenet.org/html/teenager.html>

http://kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/emotions/someone_died.html