



Factors to Consider When Determining the Need for Grief Therapy

How do you know if your child might benefit from individual or family therapy after a death?

While most children are resilient enough to adapt to life after the death of someone close, grief support groups can be beneficial for all grieving children and teens. Grief support groups help children feel they are not alone, help them discover language to describe their feelings and share those feelings with their peers, and help them learn to cope with their new life (without the deceased). In some cases, however more assistance is needed. The following is a list of grief responses which, when two or more are present, might signal a need for additional therapy by a clinical professional.

- Sudden and pronounced changes in behavior
- Preoccupation with suicide, evidenced through verbalizations, artwork or writing
- Harmful acts to self, other children or animals
- Extreme confusion, incoherence or trouble concentrating
- Substance abuse or self-inflicting behaviors
- Decline in academic performance
- Isolation or avoidance of friends and/or family
- Sudden or rapidly fluctuating changes in mood
- Increases or decreases in eating or sleeping behavior
- Preoccupation with own health or health of a loved one
- Giving away important possessions
- Depression

Some of the symptoms above are typical grief responses, and not always an indicator that additional support is needed. It is important to ensure that the child in your life receive attention and care. Sometimes the combination of individual therapy and group support can be helpful to a child, and sometimes one or the other is what your child needs. OUR HOUSE staff is available for support and consultation.

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