

## SIBLING GRIEF FOR KIDS

### What Happens when you are grieving?

It's not fair! Your brother was the best. He had his whole life ahead of him. Why did he have to die?

You can't imagine life without your sister. Everything is out of control. You want things back the way they were before.

Your whole family has changed. You don't get along or talk about things anymore.

You wish you could sit down as a family to talk about the person who died and share your fears and worries like you used to do.

At first, you can't believe that your brother or sister is really dead. Deep down, you know that they are but admitting it will somehow make it real.

You may not even feel the pain of sadness or you may feel numb.

The opposite could also be true. You may be deeply sad right from the beginning. When you look around, your whole family is sad.

You've also noticed that some people who should be sad don't seem to be and that makes you mad. Remember that they may be dealing with things by being numb right now. Check it out with them.

Ever since it happened, you may have been scared, wondering if someone else will be harmed. When a loved one dies, it's natural to feel like this.

Share your fears with your parents or other adults to get the answers that make you feel safe again.

### What are your Reactions?

It's natural to want to blame someone for the death. You may think the doctor or your parents should have done more.

Hiding this frustration can be harmful. Share your feelings with your parents or other trusted adults.

Lately, the smallest things make you angry. You're getting into fights and arguments. This is the natural anger over your sibling's death, trying to come out.

If you can't control your temper, it's time to talk to your parents, teacher or another trusted adult about what is building up inside.

When feelings don't come out, you can become depressed; lose interest in friends; or want to be alone. Talking helps the feelings get weaker and eventually, go away.

A natural part of being a brother or sister is to compete with each other for your parent's attention. This is called sibling rivalry and is part of growing up.

Maybe you wished something bad would happen to your sibling or you may have said you wished they were dead. Now you feel guilty but you can tell your parents because it was such an awful thing to do.

Just as you know that your thoughts cannot bring the person back to life, your thoughts did not cause them to die. Talk this over with someone.

If grief isn't talked about, it comes out in other ways like head or backaches or sore throats. Other times its feeling grumpy or having a short temper.

## Survivor Guilt

For whatever reason, you may think that you should be the one who died. Maybe you feel guilty about what was said or done.

Sometimes these thoughts lose their power when spoken out loud. It's important for you to talk this over with your parents or another trusted adult.

You may also feel great guilt if you were caring for your brother or sister when they died. Sometimes, people make mistakes and the results are tragic.

Finding the courage to talk it over is hard. Your parents may be more understanding than you think.

It's important that you keep talking about it until you can accept that you didn't make this accident happen on purpose.

Work toward forgiving yourself. If you don't, it may hurt you and your family throughout your life. If you need to, ask for professional help.

## Helping Each Other

It's so important to talk with a trusted adult when trying to make sense of the death.

It may be hard to talk to your friends because they're not comfortable talking about it.

And you see that your parents are hurting so you think that maybe this would add to their pain.

Looking at photographs and sharing stories about the person will help to get started. Ask your family to do this with you.

When families can find the courage and make the time to sit down together to talk, there may be tears but it's healthy to share that sadness and grief.

With your parent's permission, if possible, find another adult like an aunt, uncle, neighbour or teacher who will take the time to listen.