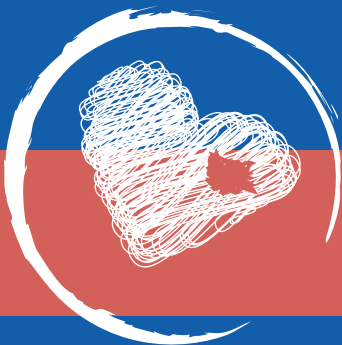


# Richmond's **Bereavement** Resource Manual



created by **Full Circle** Grief Center

# Purpose

*manual created by:*

Allyson Drake, M.Ed.  
Founder & Executive Director  
Full Circle Grief Center

Brett Alcarese, MA, NCC  
Group Counselor  
Full Circle Grief Center

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Graphic Design by:  
a/project studio  
[www.aproject.net](http://www.aproject.net)

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This manual is designed to serve as an educational resource guide to grieving families and professionals, and to provide you with a comprehensive list of national and local bereavement support services available to assist you.

It should be kept in mind that these are just guidelines, and everyone's grief journey is unique. Everyone experiences grief in their own way. There are no "rights" and "wrongs" in grieving, and grief may show up in varying ways at different times throughout your life. You will grieve in your own way, and so will your children and other family members.

**Grief is not neat & tidy.** Therefore, this manual offers some commonalities and basic information with the hope that this manual will be helpful to you and your family.

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# Full Circle Grief Center

For additional information including Full Circle's latest program schedule, please visit us online at **fullcirclegc.org**

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You can also contact us by calling  
**(804) 912-2947**  
or stopping by our center located at  
**10611 Patterson Avenue  
Building 201  
Richmond, VA 23238**

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*At Full Circle, families will find*

- Trained, nurturing grief counselors
  - A unique group model
- Support for the entire family
  - Creative outlets
- Acceptance of experiences & feelings
  - Opportunity to play
- A chance to remember and commemorate a loved one

Full Circle is a comprehensive grief resource center whose mission is to provide children and their families with creative ways to express their grief and remember their loved one. Our organization offers grief counseling groups, remembrance programs, and educational services to children, adults, and families.

We have created an environment where personal relationships are built with each family and these connections are cultivated throughout the family's grief journey. We take the time to get to know each individual, learn their story of loss, and find the ways to best support them, wherever they are in their grief journey. We enroll families in our programs, refer them to community organizations or professionals who can provide additional services, and communicate with them on a regular basis. All of our services are provided by experienced counselors or social workers, with extensive experience in the bereavement field. Our professionals have the training, knowledge, and experience to properly support the children, adolescents, and adults and develop a customized plan that will assist them in the best possible way. Full Circle strives to create a compassionate place where families feel comfortable, find ongoing support and resources, share their experiences, and begin healing.

**All of the services at Full Circle are offered at no cost to the families.**

The families are asked to make a donation for services, but all families are invited to participate regardless of ability to contribute.

# Grief & Loss

## The Grief Experience

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*Citation: 7 stages of grief: Through the process and back to life. [www.recover-from-grief.com](http://www.recover-from-grief.com)*

Grief is a normal and natural reaction to the death of a loved one. It is a process which can bring about a variety of emotions, which may remain constant for a period of time or change from day-to-day. Grief may bring about shock, sadness, fear, anger, guilt, and a variety of other emotional and physical changes. There are stages or tasks of grief that many people go through before, during and after the loss of a loved one. While not every person experiences all stages and some experience additional manifestations of their grief, this model does explain what grief may look like, sound like, and how it may feel. Though these stages help to explain what may happen during the grieving process, there is no “proper” or “improper” way to grieve.

### Shock and Denial

You will probably react to learning of the loss with numbed disbelief. You may deny the reality of the loss at some level, in order to avoid the pain. Shock provides emotional protection from being overwhelmed all at once. This may last for weeks.

**Example** *“I feel fine.” “This can’t be happening, not to me.”*

### Pain and Guilt

As the shock wears off, it is replaced with the suffering of unbelievable pain. Although excruciating and almost unbearable, it is important that you experience the pain fully, and not hide it, avoid it or escape from it, with substances such as alcohol or drugs. You may have guilty feelings or remorse over things you did or didn’t do with your loved one. Life feels chaotic and scary during this phase.

**Example** *“If I hadn’t asked him to go to the store, he would never have been in the car at all that night.” “I promised my son that we would go to the circus, and I was always ‘too busy.’ I can’t ever get that back.” “The last time my mom and I spoke, we argued about something stupid. How could I not have just said I love you?”*

### Anger and Bargaining

Frustration gives way to anger, and you may lash out and lay unwarranted blame for the death on someone else. This is a time for the release of bottled up emotion. You may rail against fate, questioning “Why me?” You may also try to bargain in vain with the powers that be for a way out of your despair.

**Example** *“Why me? It’s not fair!” “How can he/she leave me alone like this?” “Who is to blame?” “I’ll do anything for a few more years.” “I will give my life savings if...”*

## Depression, Reflection and Loneliness

Just when your friends may think you “should be” getting on with your life, a long period of sad reflection will likely overtake you. This is a normal stage of grief, so do not be “talked out of it” by well-meaning outsiders. Encouragement from others may not be helpful to you, especially when others are encouraging you to “move on.” During this time, you begin to finally realize the true magnitude of your loss, and it may be overwhelming. You may isolate yourself on purpose, reflect on things you did with your lost one, and focus on memories of the past. You may sense feelings of emptiness or despair.

## The Upward Turn

As you start to adjust to life without your loved one, your life becomes a little calmer and more organized. Your physical symptoms lessen, and your extreme sadness begins to lift slightly.

**Example** Appetite comes back or normalizes, you are able to concentrate on work/school again for varied periods of time, you begin to be able to talk about your loss.

## Reconstruction and Working Through

As you become more functional, your mind starts working again, and you will find yourself seeking realistic solutions to problems posed by life without your loved one. You will start to work on practical and financial problems and reconstructing yourself and your life without him or her.

**Example** *“I finally was able to go through his closet and decide which clothes could be donated.” “Due to all of the funeral costs and estate taxes, I realized we would have to sell my mother’s house, so we put it on the market.”*

## Acceptance and Hope

During this time, you learn to accept and deal with the reality of your situation. Acceptance does not mean instant happiness. Given the pain and turmoil you have experienced, you can never return to the carefree, untroubled YOU that existed before this tragedy. But you will find a way forward.

**Example** *“It’s going to be okay.” “I know I can’t get him/her back but I can find ways to remember all of the good things and preserve wonderful memories.” “Even though she is gone, I must go on.”* You will start to look forward and actually plan things for the future. Eventually, you will be able to think about your lost loved one without such intense pain; sadness, yes, but the wrenching pain will be gone. You will once again anticipate some good times to come, and yes, even find joy again in the experience of living.

# The Four Tasks of Grief

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*Citation: Angela Morrow, RN*

Four tasks or phases of grief have been identified, but everyone will move through them differently. You may move through the phases quickly or slowly; you may move through them in different order; you may skip a phase or task altogether. There is no specified timeline for these phases. However you move through the process will be the right way for you.

## TASK 1: Numbness

This is the phase immediately following a loss. The grieving person feels numb, which is a defense mechanism that allows them to survive emotionally.

## TASK 2: Searching & Yearning

This can also be referred to as pining and is characterized by the grieving person longing or yearning for the deceased to return. Many emotions are expressed during this time, and may include weeping, anger, anxiety, or confusion.

## TASK 3: Disorganization & Despair

The grieving person now desires to withdraw and disengage from others and activities they regularly enjoyed. Feelings of pining and yearning become less intense while periods of apathy, meaning an absence of emotion, and despair continue.

## TASK 4: Reorganization & Recovery

In this final phase, the grieving person begins to return to a new state of "normal." Weight loss experienced during the intense grieving phase may be regained, energy levels increase, and an interest to return to activities of enjoyment returns. Grief never ends, but thoughts of sadness and despair are diminished while positive memories of the deceased take over.

# Reactions to Grief

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*Citation: Children and Grief 101 and Karla Helbert, LPC*

There are many different emotions and thoughts that you may have during the grieving process. There are no “normal” or “abnormal” emotions – no right or wrong way to feel, no timeline for when you should start feeling certain ways.

## Emotional

Emotional reactions to grief may include shock or numbness, disbelief, extreme sadness, hopelessness, anxiety, frustration, despair, anger, loneliness, guilt, tiredness, etc. Some of us may also feel emotions such as relief or freedom. This can be especially true if the one who died suffered from a long illness, mental or physical. All of these emotions are normal and absolutely okay to have.

If the death is accidental or sudden, the shock/denial stage may last longer, as may the anger stage. Because the ones left behind have not had time to prepare, believing and accepting that the person is truly gone may be more difficult. As with all grieving, there is no right or wrong way to react. For example, your reaction (anger) might be different from that of your child’s (sadness) or your spouse’s (shock).

## Intellectual

Intellectual reactions, or thoughts, you or your child may have during a time of grief may include difficulty remembering things, disorganization, inability to concentrate or retain information, becoming easily frustrated or impatient, daymares (disturbing memories and dream-like fantasies during the day that may be related to the death), lack of interest or motivation in things that they or you used to love, or rational and irrational fears or worries. It might take you much longer to do what previously took you only a few minutes. This is because your body and mind are working so hard to cope with your loss, the completion of seemingly easy tasks takes a lot more effort. You and your children are under a lot of stress.

*Be patient with yourself and with your kids if this occurs. Here are some things that may help:*

- Allow ample time to complete tasks
- Write down important things
- Establish routines and schedules
- Be patient and gently refocus yourself or your child
- Break directions down into smaller segments when giving them to your children (don't tell them several things to go do at once, give them one at a time)
- Read things out loud
- Work on a task for 10-20 minute segments with 5 minute breaks (this is particularly helpful with homework for kids)
- Remind yourself and your children not to take your grief out on other people
- Practice how to ask for help and understanding
- Give yourself moments alone to relax, meditate, or just cry



## Spiritual

Spiritually, you or members of your family may be mad at religious deities or God. Questions such as...

Why did (God) let him die?

What did I do to deserve this?

Why have I been left alone?

Why is (God) punishing me?

All of these questions are normal reactions to loss and may be part of your grieving process. There are no easy answers, but if prayer or meditation is part of your beliefs, using them during this difficult time may help you in sifting through these types of questions and feelings you have while you come to terms with the death.

## Physical

Our minds and bodies are deeply connected. Grief affects not only emotions and thoughts but our physical bodies as well. You or your family members may experience changes in your bodies that seem odd or unexplainable. Some people may become overtired and sleep for hours and hours, whereas others may have trouble sleeping at all. Some may have a loss of appetite, and others may cover up emotions by over-eating. You or your children may experience headaches, stomachaches, dry mouth and skin, extreme fatigue, increased sensitivity to noise, soreness or aches and pains in the body. Your body's symptoms may relate to the areas of pain for the person who died (i.e. stomach cancer – stomachaches for you or your child). You may cry a lot or you may feel incapable of crying. Your energy levels may dip way down and you may feel like you can't get in enough air when you are breathing. All of these are symptoms of grief.

Children may regress, or display behavior characteristic of children younger than they are (bed-wetting, clinginess, whining, crying, etc.). Also, children, particularly teenagers, may display risk-taking or impulsive behaviors that are out of character. It is important to know that while some of this is normal, it is important to be open and discuss this behavior when it first begins to avoid dangerous situations and consequences. It may be difficult to drag yourself or other family members out of bed at all. However, the more you can interact with the world in a positive, pro-social way, while still taking time for the rest you need, the better it will help you cope. But, don't forget to give yourself permission to take a day when you need it. You can also practice muscle relaxation and deep breathing to combat some of these physical symptoms.

*Try the following exercises yourself or with friends/family. It's good for kids too!*

**Deep Breathing Activity** Sit in a comfortable position with your hands relaxed, either in your lap or on your knees. Relax your shoulders by pulling them up toward your ears and then allow them to drop, creating space between your ears and your shoulders. Breathe normally in and out for a few breaths. Notice how your belly rises and falls easily as you breathe naturally. Your chest should not rise a great deal as you breathe in and out. Place your hand on your belly to notice the movement as you breathe in and out.

When you are ready, breathe in – and on the next exhalation, breathe out slowly through your nose, counting to five. During this exhalation, tighten your abdominal muscles, and pull your diaphragm inward, to help squeeze all the excess air out of your lungs. When all the air is squeezed out, pause for two counts, and inhale slowly again, to the count of five, allowing your belly to expand as you breathe in. If you are comfortable doing so, close your eyes and repeat this easy deep breath 5-10 times.

If you find that your mind wanders during this exercise, don't worry. Simply bring your focus back to your breathing and begin your counts to five again. You may find it helpful to think of a happy color or a calming color as you breathe in and a dreary or sad color as you breathe out.

**Muscle Relaxation Activity** Once you get the hang of the breathing, if you would like, you can add muscle relaxation to your breathing. Focus on a particular muscle or area of the body. On your inhale, squeeze tight a particular muscle that feels tight or hurts. Release the muscle on your exhale – release and relax the muscle deeper and deeper as you let all of the air out of your lungs on each exhale. Repeat this until you feel the muscle relax or improve.

# Children, Teens & Grief

## Developmental Stages

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*Citation: 7 stages of grief: Pam Reese Comer, LPC., Shenandoah Valley Grief Center in Harrisonburg, VA*

Children often grieve very differently than adults. It has been said that children grieve in “spurts,” often playing, suddenly crying for a lost loved one, and then returning to happy, normal behavior. Because they do not “show” their grief like adults, we often assume that they are not grieving and do not need support or that they simply do not understand. Most children can only endure these intense feelings of grief for a short period of time. It is not uncommon for children to seem to be coping very well with a death and then experience behavioral changes a few months after the loss. It is possible that it takes a child longer to realize the meaning and impact of what has occurred, or the child waits to express their grief until their environment seems more stable and safe.

It is important for children to be given the opportunity to experience and express their feelings of grief, such as sadness, anger, relief, confusion, etc. They need support in understanding what happened, identifying their feelings, and embracing their loved one’s memory. Below, we have outlined the developmental stages of grief, which should be used as a reference tool only. Obviously, each child is different; therefore, his/her experience with a significant loss will be unique.

### **Children 0-3**

Children of this age will notice what is different in the family or home. They may regress in behavior (act younger than they are) or become more demanding. Comfort, consistency and attention to their sensitivity are important. Just because verbal expression is limited does not mean the child is not grieving.

### **Children 3-5**

Children of this age do not see death as permanent. Cartoons are real. People leaving is scary for children and they often blame themselves due to “magical thinking.” They assume that if you die, you can come back to life, so they may not react to a death with the same sadness and grief that older children or adults might. Reassurance, calm support and efforts to normalize life with their everyday routines are what these children need. Explaining what happened in short, clear ways can be helpful.

### **Children 6-9**

Children of this age may have begun to develop an understanding of the irreversible nature of death. Curiosity about details might be stronger at this age level. As they process the loss, fears may arise; so clear conversations and support are still helpful. Watch for a continued tendency to blame themselves because they still believe thoughts make things happen.

### **Children 9-12**

Children of this age definitely see the permanence of death, but may feel removed from the experience. Interest in the vivid details may be stronger as they reach to understand what has happened. Children at this age may express more concern over practical issues and what will change. A good listening ear is very important as verbal skills are developing. Listen carefully and respond appropriately. These children are ready for more information, but remember that this is a crucial time of development. One foot in childhood and one in adolescence is an exciting and scary place to be for some children!

## Teenagers

Adolescents do not like to be considered children, and do not want to be viewed by peers as different. Often, he/she does not want to associate with adults as much as they did. So adolescents can enter into a death or loss experience with many complex dynamics already in play. A loss makes all of us feel like a child again – teenagers will feel uncomfortable with this and find it difficult to handle. If the teen loses a parent, they may have a tendency to take on duties or roles that are not age appropriate. In other words, a teen needs to be allowed to be a teen. This child needs a parent/guardian to be a parent/guardian first and a friend second. She needs a good listening ear, non-judgmental approach, open door policy and encouragement to express her grief in whatever way works (and that may not be with all of the adults in her life!) Often, teens lean on their friends more than family as they grieve. But, don't be discouraged. Still let your child know that you are there to listen, when they would like to talk.

According to Pamela Gabbay, MA, teens worry most about the following:

- Other surviving family members
- The chance that someone else may die
- Feeling different at school or in the neighborhood
- Their future
- Whether the person who died was proud of them

Helping children is not hard. It means remembering what you needed as a child and — whether you got it or not — giving it to children. The goal of grief work as children or adults is to make the loss a part of you and to grow from it. You are forever changed. Life becomes about creating a new normal.

# Talking to Youth about Death

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*Citation: Alan Wolfelt, PhD, C.T.*

It is important to talk to children about death in simple but matter of fact terms. Normalize death (it happens to everyone and every living thing but usually when we are very old) and be clear about what it means. If death is not discussed at all, it becomes scarier when it affects a child's life. There are many wonderful books, some of which are listed in this manual, that help families explain death and dying to children.

*General guidelines on how to talk to grieving children:*

- Talk openly about death
- Share your feelings
- Be honest and direct
- Avoid euphemisms
- Teach what you believe about afterlife
- Give inviting, loving nonverbal cues
- Attend to your own grief

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## Strategies for Talking to Children Ages 2-6

### 1. Start Early

Talk about death starting at an early age by using everyday examples from TV or the death of animals. This will help them view death as part of the natural life cycle.

### 2. Tell It How It Is

Use simple, truthful words like “dead,” “dying,” “died,” “buried,” or “cremated.” Dead means not moving, not breathing, not seeing, and not feeling. The person’s or animal’s body does not work anymore. Though it may sound nicer to you to use phrases that make death sound less final, it can be very confusing to the child.

*Examples of confusing explanations:*

*“We lost him.”*

**Child’s response** *Let’s go look for him! Can’t the police help? If I’m lost, will they look for me?*

*“He passed away.”*

**Child’s response** *Where is away? Can we go there?*

*“She went for a long trip.”*

**Child’s response** *Where did she go? When will she get back? What do you mean she’s not coming back if it’s just a trip?*

*“We had to put Fluffy to sleep.”*

**Child’s response** *Why isn’t he waking up like I do? Will I be able to wake up? (Sleeping means dead, so I’d better not go to sleep.)*

*“God took her from us.”*

**Child’s response** *Why would God do that? You’re not supposed to take things from other people. I want to take her back!*

*“God wanted Dad in heaven with him.”*

**Child’s response** *God takes people from us. How could God love us?*

### 3. Tell The Truth

Do not “protect” a child from someone who is dying or from the cause of death. Be honest about what is happening (in age appropriate terms) and let them see you express your emotions. Define new words they may be hearing.

### 4. Encourage Questions

Ask for questions the child may have but do not volunteer complex information the child has not asked. Tell them the main facts and do answer all of their questions simply and promptly. If you don’t know, it’s ok to say that you don’t know. Ask the child what he or she thinks the answer might be

### 5. Allow All Feelings

Encourage the child to express feelings openly. Crying is normal and helpful. Many children express anger towards the person for dying and leaving them. It is important to allow them to express these feelings and let them know it is ok to have them. (Anger is one of the stages of grief.)

### 6. Express Yourself

Share your feelings with the child. Seeing you upset will not make the child worse. It lets him/her know you are hurting too. Allow the child to comfort you – this makes him/her feel helpful and needed. It’s ok for children to see you cry.

### 7. Be Patient

Know that children need to hear “the story” and to ask the same questions again and again. This is how they are processing it. You may also see it in their play.

#### 8. What If's

"Are you going to die too?" "What will happen to me if you die?" If the child is worried about the surviving parent or siblings dying, tell the child who will take care of him or her in that case but offer reassurance that they are not likely to die anytime soon. Point out elderly people the child knows or sees and discuss how many people live to old age.

#### 9. Exposure

Limit the amount of exposure to television if the death is being publicized. This can increase nightmares, worry, and expose children to knowledge of unnecessary details.

#### 10. Reassurance

Reassure the child of his/her safety at home and at school.

#### 11. Outlets

Maintain daily routines as much as possible, as this signifies safety to a child. But, allow your gut to guide you about when you need to be flexible. Give the child a chance to play and spend time with you, as this is how the child will express what is going on inside. More specific suggestions for constructive outlets for grief are discussed in the section of this manual entitled "self care."

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## Strategies for Talking to Children Ages 7-12

Use all of the information from "Talking to children ages 2-6", but be prepared to go into more detail and answer more questions.

1. When children ask "morbid" or "distasteful" questions about the body and death, it is best to answer them promptly, simply and to the point. In order to determine how much information a child can handle, notice how he or she reacts to the simplest information before going into the details. Do not be too graphic (particularly in the case of accidents and violent deaths) as this will only create difficult mental images for the child.

2. If the child is experiencing unrealistic feelings of guilt because he or she thinks they somehow caused the death, discuss these feelings with the child and help him or her to clear up this misconception.

3. Many children express anger towards the person for dying and leaving them. It is important to allow them to express these feelings and let them know it is ok

to have them. (Anger is one of the strong feelings of grief.)

4. If the child is worried about the surviving parent or siblings dying, tell the child who will take care of him or her in that case but offer reassurance that they are not likely to die anytime soon.

5. Point out elderly people the child knows or sees and discuss how many people live to old age.

6. Don't be afraid to share your own feelings of grief and sorrow with the child. By allowing the child to see your tears, you teach the child that it is acceptable to express his/her emotions too.

7. By watching you move through the stages of your grief and begin to heal, the child learns that life goes on and that people can recover to rebuild their lives while still keeping the deceased in their hearts.

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## Strategies for Talking to Adolescents

Adolescents or teenagers are a bit different because of the desire to fit in with their peers and “deal” with things. They are at a stage in their lives where they are breaking away from the family and bonding with peers. A death in the family challenges this role. Adolescents may feel different from their peers due to the death so they may suppress many of their feelings of grief in an attempt to fit in. Naturally changing hormones and mood swings may increase the intensity of the grief at times, making it even more difficult to cope.

*The following may help in talking to adolescents during this time:*

1. Educate them about normal reactions to grief so they know they are not going crazy and can trust the way their minds, bodies, and emotions are reacting. If this is difficult, provide movies or books (many of which are listed in this manual) they can look at on their own.
2. Encourage them to express what the grief experience is like for them. Recognize and affirm that the experience is likely to be different from others' in the family. Model appropriate expressions of emotion yourself so that they can follow your example. If they prefer not to talk, suggest using other outlets: a journal to write in, art, photography, sports, music, etc.
3. Tell stories about the person who died. Keep photos of them up and around the house. Discuss going to the grave site. Listening to what your teen says will be helpful to him/her. This may take time.
4. Talk about how you do not expect your teen to take on an adult role now that someone important has died. Encourage normal teenage activities once he or she is ready to re-engage in them. They may be ready right

away and use them as a coping mechanism or it may take time, as grieving takes a lot of energy. Be encouraging and let them know you love them and will support them always.

### THOUGHTS FROM TEENS ABOUT DEATH AND GRIEF

#### **After the death, the most difficult part was...**

*Citation: National Alliance of Grief Children, [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)*

*“Not seeing him every day and talking to him.”*

*“Adapting to life without my mom- she was my best friend.”*

*“Going to school with the weight of thinking about it.”*

*“My friends don’t know what to say.” Or “I lost some of my friends because they didn’t know what to do.”*

*“I am angry about how many regrets I have.”*

*“I pretended to be strong. No one would have guessed the turmoil inside of me.”*

*“I just want to be normal again.”*

# Questions about Death

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*Citation:* National Alliance of Grief Children, [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)

When your children ask questions about death, burial, the afterlife, etc. Be honest, limit details, and use your own spiritual beliefs to guide you. Here are a few possibilities of how you might answer some of these questions, though you may choose to alter your response:

**Question** *What is dead?*

**Answer** *Dead means not alive anymore. Things like people, animals, and trees and plants are alive. When they die, they stop breathing because their bodies don't need air. Their hearts stop beating and their bodies don't work anymore. They don't eat or drink or sleep when they die. (Based on your spiritual beliefs, you may discuss where their soul is, etc.)*

**Question** *Why do things have to die?*

**Answer** *Birth and death is the cycle of life. Every living thing goes through it because that is the way the world works. (Use a leaf/flower as an example - bud in the Spring, blooms, turns brown in the Fall, dies. Then new life is reborn next Spring. It is not the exact same leaf/flower, but it is new life.) But, just because someone's body dies does not mean they are gone from our hearts. We remember them when we do their favorite things, eat their favorite foods, and make the best parts of them part of ourselves.*

**Question** *Will I die? or Will you die?*

**Answer** *Someday you/I will. All living things are born and all living things die. But, most people die when they are very old. Do you notice very old people in our world? Yes, there are many so you know many people live for a long time. (Reassure the child that it is not likely that you will die soon but if you do, tell them who will take care of them.)*

**Question** *What happens when someone is buried?*

**Answer** *(Person's name) won't feel anything because she died. It is just her body. You don't have feelings when you are dead.*

**Question** *What happens after you die?*

**Answer** *No one really knows for sure what happens - what do you think might happen? Use your own spiritual beliefs to guide you in answering this question.*

# How to Talk to Children About Specific Types of Death

*Citation:* How to talk to children and teens about death, suicide, funerals, homicide, cremations and other end-of-life matters  
by Alan D. Wolfelt, PH.D., C.T.

## When a Parent Dies

When a child loses a parent, it is important to reassure them that you are there to care for them.

When a child says, *"Where is mommy? When will she be home?"*

**Response** *"Mommy is dead, and she isn't coming back, but we are here to take care of you and love you."*

Or when a young person says, *"Mom won't be there to see me graduate."*

**Response** *"That must feel hard. I know graduation is an important time for you, and you want everyone you love to share it with you. I am sorry she can't be here, but the rest of us will be right beside you."*

## When a Sibling Dies

Siblings often share strong feelings for each other, including feelings of love and caring, as well as feelings of jealousy and competition. Ambivalent feelings can complicate grief and create a sense of guilt or self-blame.

When a young person says, *"It should have been me who died, not Sam."*

**Response** *"Each person's life is precious and I care about you both very much. You are just as worthy of life as Sam was. What are you feeling?"*

## When a Grandparent Dies

When a child says, *"Why couldn't the doctors stop Grandma from dying?"*

**Response** *"Many times doctors save people from dying, but sometimes they try their best and the person still dies. Their body is just too broken to fix, like Grandma's. Most people go to hospitals to get better, but once in a while, people die."*

## When a Friend or Classmate Dies

When a child says, *"I can't believe this happened."*

**Response** *"It might take a while to sink in, and that's OK. You are in shock right now, and that's normal when you find out someone has died. Shock means you feel disbelief and numbness. You may be unable to believe it happened, or you may want to deny that Maddie died. Is that how you feel?"*

## When Someone Dies by Suicide

When a child asks, *"How did Uncle Matt die?"*

**Response** *"Do you know how our bodies can get sick? Well, Uncle Matt's brain got sick and it hurt so bad that he chose to stop living."*

Or if a young person asks, *"What is suicide?"*

**Response** *"Suicide happens with someone gets very depressed, which is like being sad times 100 without a break. It hurts a lot, and makes a person want to stop the hurt. Sometimes, someone may think the only way he can stop hurting is to stop living."*

If they ask, *"Why did he do it?"*

**Response** *"I don't know for sure, but I do know he felt that life was very hard for him and just didn't know how to stop his pain, or what he was trying didn't work. I know it's hard to understand. I struggle with it too. I do know he really cared for you, though, and his death had nothing to do with you."*

## When Someone Dies by Homicide

Grief after the traumatic death of a loved one to homicide or manslaughter is often complicated by feelings of turmoil, distrust, injustice and hopelessness. It is important to provide young people with loving care and extra support from others immediately and for months following the death.

When a child says, *"Why did he kill Joshua? Joshua was a good person! Why couldn't it have been someone else?"*

**Response** *"I know it makes no sense and you are right, it is unfair. You know, it can help to write about it. How about you write a letter to the bad person and tell him how awful it feels to be without Joshua?"*



## About the Funeral

When a child asks, “What is a funeral? What happens at funeral?”

**Response** “A funeral is when friends and family get together to remember the person who died. We go to the service and sit quietly with other people who knew and care about Uncle Ned. People will take turns talking about Uncle Ned, singing, and reading poems or telling stories about him. Some people will be crying, and at times, some people may laugh. Do you think you would like to attend Uncle Ned’s funeral?”

When a child asks, “What is cremation?”

**Response** “Cremation is when a body is put into a room with lots of heat until it turns to ashes. The crematory, where they cremate the body, gives the family the ashes, and we can sprinkle them as a group in places that were special to Uncle Ned, like up at his cabin.”

## Child Speak for Death & Mourning Rituals

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Citation: Michelle Post, LMFT, [www.Michelle-Post.com](http://www.Michelle-Post.com)  
and Alan Wolfelt, *Healing the Bereaved Child*

These simple words and definitions may be helpful in explaining death to a child.

### Ashes

What is left of a dead body after cremation; is white or grey in color, and looks and feels like tiny rocks or chunky sand.

### Burial

Placing the body (inside a casket or urn) into the ground at a special place called a cemetery.

### Casket

A special box (usually 4 sides) for burying a dead body.

### Cemetery

A place where many dead bodies and ashes are buried. (One child called it the ‘people park’ because it often looks like a park with grass and trees.)

### Columbarium

A small building at a cemetery where ashes are placed.

### Cremation

The process of turning a dead body into ashes. The body is placed in a special box at the crematorium, and it is heated until it turns into ash.

### Dead

When a person’s body stops working. It doesn’t see, hear, feel, eat, breath, etc. anymore.

### Funeral

A ceremony where friends and family get together for a time to say goodbye to and remember or share memories of the person who died. Sometimes the body can be viewed at the ceremony.

### Funeral Home

A place where bodies are kept until they are buried or cremated. Sometimes the funeral or viewing can happen here.

### Grave

The hole in the ground where the body is buried at the cemetery.

### Headstone

The sign that marks the place where the body is buried or ashes are placed. It is often made of stone or metal and may be engraved with the person’s name, date of birthday and date of death. The ‘head’ is not placed inside the stone (also called the grave marker).

### Hearse

The special car that takes the dead body in the casket to the grave (often at the cemetery).

**Memorial Service** See *funeral for definition of ceremony*.

Usually the body is not viewed at this ceremony (also can be called a ‘celebration of life’).

### Obituary

A short article in the newspaper that tells about the person who died.

### Pallbearer

The people who help carry the casket at the funeral.

### Scattering

When the ashes of the cremated body are emptied onto a special place (in the air, water, or on the ground). Can be a ceremony with family and friends.

### Urn

A special container that holds and protects the ashes of the cremated body.

### Viewing

The time when people can see the body of the person who died and say goodbye

# The Parent or Guardian's Role

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*Citation: Grief at School by The Hospice of Virginia*

The “Grief at School” program from Hospice of Virginia succinctly describes a number of things that parents or guardians can do (some of which have already been discussed in previous sections) to help children through the grieving process:

- Focus on your children. Watch for unusual behavior or physical symptoms.
- Reassure them of your love and their safety.
- Make time to talk and monitor what they are thinking and feeling.
- Be a good listener, without judging. Allow all feelings to be expressed and accepted.
- Stay physically close to your children. This will reassure them and allow you time to observe their behavior. Extra hugs and cuddling may help! Remember, it is common for children's behavior to regress (for children to act younger than they are) during grieving.
- Limit the amount of television exposure if the event is publicized. If the event is not publicized, also limit television programs that may be scary or traumatic. They have enough to deal with in their own lives right now.
- Maintain daily routines but be flexible.
- Spend extra time with your children – reading, playing, games.
- Protect their health – make sure children are getting the appropriate amount of sleep, exercise, and nutrition. If any or all of these remain difficult after a few weeks, consider consulting professional help.
- Provide a positive outlet of expression of grief: creative projects, family time, or religious rituals depending on your personal beliefs.
- Involve the school. Find out what resources your child's school has available. Call your child's school counselor for ideas and advice, as well as resources and referrals. The more the school knows about the tragedy and how your child is coping, the more the staff can help.

## Supporting Your Child Through the Death of Parent/Immediate Family

Follow guidelines in “The Parent’s Role” but also keep these issues in mind:

### **Manage your own grief and prioritize your own self-care**

Many children do not begin to truly grieve until their parent(s) are further along in their own process. By managing your own grief and taking care of yourself, you model good coping skills for your children and help them grieve themselves.

### **Talk if they need to talk and even if they don’t**

If you are open and honest about the feelings you feel, your children will feel safe in sharing their feeling with you. It is ok to cry together, tell them when you are feeling sad, and share age-appropriate thoughts with them. Again, you are modeling positive coping skills.

### **Realize importance of rituals and remembrance**

Even if it is painful to remember the loved one who died, it is especially important to do so on anniversaries and special events so that your child knows that death does not mean forgetting. Try to make these remembrance activities fun: make the loved one’s favorite meal together or do something as a family that the loved one liked to do. The more positive memories that the child can associate with remembering the one who died, the better able they will be to cope.

### **Recognize resurfacing**

Grief is a tricky thing. There will be developmental milestones in your child’s life when grief will resurface, particularly during times of change (anniversary of the death, holidays, new school, moving, puberty, graduation, college, etc.) Be ready for these times and show your support through them.

## Supporting Your Child Through the Death of Friend/Classmate/Peer

Follow guidelines in “The Parent’s Role” but also keep these issues in mind:

### **Limit details**

As previously advised, discuss the main events of the death with your child and answer any questions they may have, but do not go into unnecessary detail. Younger children may not have as difficult a time with a peer’s death (unless they were very close to the child or witnessed the death) as an older child or teenager might. Meet them where they are emotionally.

### **Talk it out**

Listen to and accept the feelings your child expresses regarding the death of the peer. Know that this death may bring up memories or feelings associated with other losses your child has experienced in the past.

### **Allow for expression of feelings**

Allow your child to take part in ritual activities if they are organized by the school or religious organization. If not, call the school counselor or Full Circle and see if you can help in holding a ritual for the peer group. Look at the section in this manual entitled “Rituals and Remembrance Activities” for ideas.

# Talking to Children about Violence: Tips for Parents & Teachers

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*Citation:* National Association of School Psychologists [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org)

## **Reassure children that they are safe**

Validate their feelings. Explain that all feelings are okay when a tragedy occurs. Let children talk about their feelings, help put them into perspective, and assist them in expressing those feelings appropriately. Make time to talk. Let their questions be your guide as to how much information to provide. Keep your explanations developmentally appropriate. Be patient. Children and you do not always talk about their feelings readily but watch for clues that they may want to talk.

## **Observe children's emotional state**

Changes in behavior, appetite, and sleep patterns can indicate a child's level of anxiety or discomfort. In most children, these symptoms will ease with reassurance and time however some children with a past traumatic experience or personal loss, suffer from depression or mental illness or with special needs may be at greater risk for more intense reactions. Seek help from a mental health professional if you are at all concerned.

## **Maintain a normal routine**

Keeping to a regular schedule can be reassuring and promote physical health. Ensure that children get plenty of sleep, regular meals, and exercise.

# Perinatal Loss & Death of an Infant

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*Citation:* SHARE, Pregnancy and Infant Loss Support, Inc at [www.nationalshare.org](http://www.nationalshare.org)

*The following provides frequently asked questions of bereaved parents, friends, and family.*

## Bereaved Parents

**I feel like I am sad all the time. Is this normal?** Experiencing the death of a baby can be shocking, and the many emotions you have may be overwhelming. The intense feelings of your grief will not last forever; there will come a time when the heartache is less painful. It is important for you to know that what you are feeling is normal for you. Give yourself permission to grieve. Intense feelings associated with grief can last up to 2 years, but not all that time is spent in deep grief. Incorporating your loss into daily life takes patience and time. When a baby dies, so many expectations and hopes were shattered, and now you are finding ways to put the pieces of life back together when some of them don't fit anymore.

**It seems like my spouse isn't grieving for our baby. Why are we so different?** The death of a baby can be difficult for both parents. It is important to give yourself permission to grieve the way you need to grieve, and to allow the same for your spouse. You and your partner may have similar feelings, yet you may feel miles apart. You may even have difficulty understanding how your partner is grieving even though you both lost this baby. As much as some people would like one, there is not a step-by-step process for grieving. Everyone grieves differently. Some people are quiet in their grief, choosing solitary activities. Others may be more expressive in how they show grief and may be more assertive in grieving, such as sharing openly, crying, or sharing and making memories. For the quiet griever, they may be perceived as cold and irritable, or even depressed. Your partner may wonder why you don't feel the same emotions at the same times. You may need to take a long walk alone, while your partner may need to be held and hear that you are sad too. It is normal to question your spouse, or for your spouse to question where you are in your grief. People want to know that they are all right and that you are too. Finding ways to express to your partner how you grieve or what you need to get through the death of your baby is invaluable to your relationship.

**How do I cope with other people? How will my coworkers understand when I go back to work?** Even for someone who has experienced the loss of a baby, your experience is different and unique. Many times they don't know what to say, and don't understand you lost a part of you, including the future you were planning together. They may say things they feel are comforting, but make you angry. Most people are not trying to be insensitive to you; they just don't truly understand the impact the death of your baby had on you. The best way to communicate with your friends, family, and coworkers when you are grieving is to be honest and specific in what you need. If you are not a verbal person, write a note telling them how you feel, what you have been through, or how you need to be supported. Depending on the relationships you have built, going back to work may be difficult. It is normal to have feelings of confusion, crying, having difficult days, or having trouble concentrating. Grief can make a normal day of work unbearable. Do your best to find appropriate ways to communicate your needs as a grieving parent and coworker/friend. As you continue grieving and remembering your baby, days will begin to fall into a new normal pattern.

## Grandparent's Grief

**Why does the death of my grandchild hurt so much?** A grandparent's grief can be a complicated journey. Your grief is twofold. Not only are you mourning the loss of your grandchild, you have lost a part of your son or daughter that will never be the same. Many grandparents feel a sense of helplessness because they are unable to prevent the anguish their own child feels. Life may now seem more fragile and unfair than ever. These feelings may be frustrating, but they are completely normal for grandparents and family to feel as they, too, experience the loss of this baby. I don't know what to do or say.

**How can I support my son or daughter?** Sometimes there is just nothing to say. Just be quiet, be with them, hold their hand, touch their shoulder, or give them a hug. If you can't find the right words say, "I'm sorry," or "I just don't know what to say." Avoid clichés like "Thank goodness you are young, you can have more children," or "God wouldn't give you more than you can handle." What may seem comforting to you may be very hurtful to them. Check up on your son or daughter. Be specific in your offer to help. Perhaps offer to run errands, provide food, or do laundry. After a few weeks, people generally don't stop by as often. Parents need a reminder that they are not alone. One misconception is that the shorter the baby's life, the easier the grief process. The opposite is true. Chances are your child is grieving not only the loss of his or her baby, but their pregnancy or hopes and dreams for the future. Acknowledge the baby by using his or her name. This shows you value the short life of your grandchild.

Avoid giving advice. There are no rules that define how one should feel or how soon one will return to the norms of daily life. Your child needs to be heard without feeling judgment or receiving unwanted advice. Grief can make people more sensitive and vulnerable. It is very difficult to watch your own child grieve, and after some time you may wonder why they have not gotten better. The parents of a baby that dies needs more time to grieve, as the average intense grieving period could be up to 24 months. Parents will go through ups and downs during this time, but allowing them time and being patient will help them grieve. Remember special dates or holidays. Parents, and grandparents, may be saddened by special events or dates like birthdays, due date, delivery date, Mother's or Fathers' Day, because it is a reminder that their baby is not here. Acknowledge how difficult these days may be without the baby, and ask how they are doing. Showing your recognition with hugs, cards, gifts, or special remembrances also helps to create special mementos.

**How do I talk to my son or daughter about the future?** The future is best held in the hands and hearts of your son or daughter. Allow them to share their thoughts on future pregnancies or children without pressure or prodding. Even though you may have good intentions, encouraging or implying that parents should have more children may make the parents feel as though you are minimizing their loss. When the time is right, your son or daughter will share with you their plans, and it will be all right to share your emotions. Just remember, whether or not there are more children in the future for your son or daughter, it is important to remember and honor your grandchild that died.

## Children's Grief

**How can I support my grieving child(ren)?** Children want to share their experience of grief with adults. Your child's love for the baby may be very special, and it will be unique as to how much they were included during the pregnancy/birth. Open-ended questions can help you talk and listen to what your child feels. You can ask, "How does that make you feel?" or "What would you like to do for the baby?"

Children need honesty, not deception, when it comes to sharing sad news. Generally, children find ways to cope with grief. It is important to refrain from using clichés, half-truths, and fairy tales that may not explain the mystery of death. Remember that children think literally. Using phrases like "we lost the baby," "the baby is sleeping with God," "the baby went on a long trip," or "the baby is watching over you now" can be confusing because of the literal meaning of the phrases. Use an honest explanation like, "The baby died. That means her heart stopped beating and her body doesn't work anymore. She is not with us like she used to be, but we will always remember and love her very much," explains literally what happened. Use simple and honest explanations. Allow your child to ask questions. Younger children tend to need to repeat the same question again and again. Each time you repeat the answer or story honestly, you are allowing your child to understand it more deeply. Because you too are grieving, this may be a frustrating process. Do your best to be patient and open, as children learn how to cope from your sincere feelings, actions and responses to their questions

## Ways to Support a Parent Whose Baby Has Died

For many families who are pregnant with or have recently delivered a very loved and wanted baby, hopes and dreams are torn apart with the news that the baby has died. The following information has been gathered by bereaved parents, friends, and professionals.

Here are some ways to better acknowledge the death of a baby and communicate with these parents experiencing grief.

- Say *"I am sorry"*
- Avoid clichés such as:
  - *"Everything happens for a reason"*
  - *"Thank goodness you are young and can still have more children"*
  - *"I understand how you feel"* (unless you have an experience to share)
  - *"There must have been something wrong with the baby"*
  - *"It was meant to be"*
  - *"You have an angel in heaven"*
  - *"At least you didn't get to know the baby"*
  - *"I guess it's good it happened now"*
  - *"At least you have other children at home"*
  - *"God will never give you more than you can handle"*
- Silence can be okay.
- Respond to this death just like you would for other deaths. Send flowers, sympathy cards, share special remembrances, phone calls, make/bring dinner. If you are a close family member or friend, it may be helpful if you ask to help maintain laundry, basic house cleaning or cooking, or watch other children at home. Be specific in your offer to help.
- Acknowledge the baby with his/her name. By doing this, you are showing the parents you value the short life of their baby.
- Avoid giving advice.

# Suicide Loss

## Supporting a Child Through Suicide

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*Citation: After a Parent's Suicide: Helping Children Heal by Margo Requarth, MA, MFT, [www.save.org](http://www.save.org), and [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)*

Below are tips for talking with a child about a suicide death and supporting them through their grief.

- Give the child honest information in doses, suitable for his/her age. A more detailed explanation may include, "Our thoughts and feelings come from our brain, and sometimes a person's brain can get very sick-the sickness can cause a person to feel very badly inside. It also makes a person's thoughts get all jumbled and mixed up, so sometimes they cannot think clearly. Some people can't think of any other way of stopping the hurt they feel inside. They don't understand that they don't have to feel that way, that they can get help."
- It's okay to cry and express grief while telling your child. Typical questions from a child include: Why? What happened? Why would he/she want to leave me?
- A child should understand that the person who died loved them, but that because of the illness he/she may have been unable to convey that or to think about how the child would feel after the death.
- Be prepared to talk about the suicide multiple times during the first days and weeks, and later throughout the child's life.
- Reassure your child that it was not his/her fault. Listen closely without interrupting to what the child believes contributed to their loved one's suicide.
- Reassure children that they are not responsible for adult decisions.
- Let your child know about depression and mental illness. Example includes something like "mental illness changes the chemistry of one's brain, and can cloud a person's judgment or decision making and make them feeling hopeless. Brain illnesses, just like cancer or heart disease, can cause people to die too."
- Help your child learn to respond to others about suicide. A child can decide whom and whom to talk about the suicide, as well as what experiences he/she wishes to share. A child can always say something like "I'm too sad to talk about this" or "I don't want to talk about this right now."
- If your child wants to respond, help him/her have an answer ready. It is good to role play with your child.
- Some children might ask questions related to the morals of suicide- good/bad, right/wrong. It is best to steer clear of this, if possible. Suicide is none of these, it is something that happens when the pain exceeds resources for coping with that pain.



# Explaining Suicide to a Child

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*Citation:* AFSP: Survivor Initiatives Department, 2014 120 Wall Street, 29th Floor, New York, NY 10005

For many adults, suicide can be very upsetting and frightening. If you find yourself having to explain suicide to a child, you may be wondering about the best way to do it. You can even be so overwhelmed that you feel tempted to “protect” the child by saying that the death was caused by a heart attack or an accident, rather than by suicide.

*To help, here are some practical guidelines.*

- Telling the Truth: If someone dies of a brain illness such as a tumor, you’d intuitively know what to say, even to a young child: “Daddy died of a serious illness in his brain.”
- So it’s important to keep in mind that the research shows that more than 90% of people who die by suicide have a diagnosable (although not always identified) brain illness at the time of their death, most often depression, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia, often complicated by substance abuse. Just as people can die of heart disease or cancer, they can die as a complication of psychiatric illness.
- These illnesses can cause terrible suffering and desperate hopelessness. They can also affect a person’s ability to make appropriate decisions such as whether to seek help, continue treatment, or take prescribed medication.
- If you can begin to see suicide as the tragic outcome of a serious illness, rather than as a moral weakness, a character flaw, irresponsibility, or a hostile act, it will become easier for you to talk about it openly and with compassion.
- Talking about suicide will not increase the risk that others will go on to take their own lives. In fact, like a death from any other serious illness, suicide is now part of the family’s health history. Knowing the truth about mental illness and suicide enables all surviving family members to be appropriately vigilant about their own health going forward, and take preventative steps.
- Although it’s understandable that adults naturally wish to protect children from pain or bad news, shielding children from the truth can undermine trust and create a legacy of secrecy and shame that can persist for generations.
- You can protect children best by offering comfort, reassurance, and honest answers to their questions.

# Adults Coping with Suicide

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*Citation:* Suicide and Its Aftermath: Understanding and Counseling the Survivors by Edward Dunne, John McIntosh and Karen Dunne-Maxim [www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)

Here are some suggestions for adults coping with a suicide loss:

- Know you can survive. You may not think so, but you can.
- Know you may feel overwhelmed by the intensity of your feelings, but all your feelings are normal.
- Anger, guilt, confusion, forgetfulness are common responses. You are not crazy—you are in mourning.
- Be aware you may feel appropriate anger at the person, at the world, at God, at yourself. It's okay to express it.
- You may feel guilty for what you think you did or did not do.
- Guilt can turn into regret through forgiveness.
- Having suicidal thoughts is common. It does not mean that you will act on those thoughts.
- Remember to take one moment or one day at a time.
- Find a good listener with whom to share. Call some one if you need to talk.
- Don't be afraid to cry. Tears are healing.
- Give yourself time to heal.
- Remember, the choice was not yours. No one is the sole influence in another's life.
- Expect setbacks. If emotions return like a tidal wave, you may only be experiencing a remnant of grief, an unfinished piece.
- Try to put off major decisions.
- Give yourself permission to get professional help.
- Be aware of the pain of your family and friends.
- Be patient with yourself and with others who may not understand.
- Set your own limits and learn to say no.
- Steer clear of people who want to tell you what or how to feel.
- Know that there are support groups that can be helpful. If you can't find one, ask a professional to help start one.
- Call on your personal faith to help you through.
- It is common to experience physical reactions to your grief, such as headaches, loss of appetite, inability to sleep.
- The willingness to laugh with others and at yourself is healing.
- Wear out all your questions, anger, guilt or other feelings until you can let them go. Letting go doesn't mean forgetting.
- Know that you will never be the same again, but you can survive and even go beyond just surviving

# When Additional Support Is Needed

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Though many of us are resilient, grief can test us in extreme ways. Grief support can help families and individuals to develop positive ways to cope with emotions and thoughts and help people develop outlets to express their grief and begin to heal. Grief support is not about helping people to “get over it.” People will never and should never get over the loss of those they love.

However, they can learn to work through the grief, heal broken hearts, and make those who have died loving parts of themselves who will always be remembered.

Friends, family, clergy, or mental health professionals may be helpful in supporting individuals and family through the bereavement process. In this section, we have outlined times when specific support may be needed for you or your children.

**If you have further questions or concerns, please contact the professionals at Full Circle at (804) 912-2947.**

# Complicated Grief

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*Citation:* Adapted from Mayo Clinic. 2009. Complicated Grief: Symptoms.

## Signs/Symptoms of Complicated Grief

There are times when grief can become overwhelming and regular coping strategies are not enough. Watch for signs and symptoms in your children, other family members, and yourself and be honest about what you see. There is no shame in needing help during such a difficult time. While some of these symptoms are normal following the death of a loved one, continued presence of two or more of these may call for professional intervention.

*The following are signs and symptoms that demonstrate the need for additional help in coping with grief:*

- Extreme sadness that prohibits the person from continuing with everyday necessary life activities (a month or more)
- Unwillingness to drink/eat for more than a few days
- Suicidal thoughts or a suicidal attempt
- Continual nightmares and/or night terrors for a prolonged period of time (a month or more)
- Sleeping far too little or way too much
- Intense anxiety
- Avoidance of feelings for a prolonged period of time
- Being overwhelmed with emotion – feeling out of control
- Preoccupation with the events of the death so that these thoughts interfere in and disrupt daily living
- Outbursts of irritability or anger at school and/or home
- Difficulty concentrating on things usually enjoyed
- Significant decrease in normal activities at home and school
- Detachment or withdrawal from friends or family

### **When to get additional help for self or child...**

If you see two or more of the signs or symptoms of complicated grief in yourself, in your children, or in other family members, please seek additional help. Support may be needed to cope with this grief.

**Please refer to the list of resources in this manual for guidance in how to seek this help.**

# Depression & Anxiety

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*Citation: Crisislink.org. 2009. Arlington, VA*

## **Depression/Anxiety Disorders/Post Traumatic Stress Disorder**

Depression and anxiety symptoms are common with grief, especially in the early stages. However, if the feelings and behaviors are displayed for weeks into months at severe levels, and interfere with the person's ability to cope effectively with everyday life, more help is needed.

**Signs of Major Depression** – when displayed for 3 months or more at a time.

- Sadness
- Irritability
- Loss of interest in usual activities
- Low energy and/or restlessness
- Poor concentration
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Dramatic weight gain or loss
- Otherwise unexplained/chronic physical ailments
- Feeling hopeless and helpless
- Feeling worthless and guilty
- Thoughts of death or suicide

**Anxiety Disorders** – characterized by excessive and persistent fears and worries that interfere with an individual's ability to cope effectively with everyday life.

Generalized Anxiety Disorder is excessive, uncontrollable worry about everyday things. This constant worry affects daily functioning and can cause physical symptoms. The focus of GAD worry can shift, usually focusing on issues like job, finances, health of both self and family; but it can also include more mundane issues such as chores, car repairs and being late for appointments. The intensity, duration and frequency of the worry are disproportionate to the issue and interfere with the sufferer's performance of tasks and ability to concentrate.

**Panic attacks** – defined by the abrupt onset of episodes of intense fear or discomfort, include at least four of the following symptoms:

- A feeling of imminent danger or doom
- The need to escape
- Palpitations
- Sweating
- Trembling
- Shortness of breath or a smothering feeling
- A feeling of choking
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Nausea or abdominal discomfort
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- A sense of things being unreal, depersonalization
- A fear of losing control or “going crazy”
- A fear of dying
- Tingling sensations
- Chills or hot flashes

**Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)** - not a disorder to be associated solely with military personnel, as it has been in the past. It has been shown that exposure to traumas such as a serious accident, a natural disaster, or criminal assault can result in PTSD. When the aftermath of a traumatic experience interferes with normal functioning, the person may be suffering from PTSD. PTSD can occur at any age, from childhood to old age and traumatic stress can be cumulative over a lifetime. Responses to trauma include feelings of intense fear, helplessness, and/or horror.

**If these symptoms of depression and/or anxiety are being displayed by those you love or if you are experiencing them for prolonged periods of time and you feel unable to cope with everyday life, please seek the help of a professional.**

# The Risk of Suicide

Citation: Crisislink.org. 2009. Arlington, VA [www.crisislink.org](http://www.crisislink.org)

**CrisisLink: (703) 527-4077**  
**Support: 1-800-273-TALK**  
**or 1-800-SUICIDE**

Extreme grief or the death of a loved one by suicide can increase the risk of suicide in those who have survived the loss and now must cope with it. Below are signs of suicidal behavior. Grief can make emotions run in extremes — highs and lows. If the lows are bad, life can seem hopeless and suicide may be perceived as a possible way out. If you see these in a loved one or are experiencing them yourself, take them seriously and seek help immediately.

## Signs of Suicidal Behavior

### Things People Might Say...

- *"I'm tired of life. I can't go on."*
- *"My family would be better off without me."*
- *"Who cares if I'm dead anyway?"*
- *"I just want out."*
- *"I won't be around much longer."*
- *"Soon you won't have to worry about me."*
- *"I wish I were dead."*
- *"I'm going to end it all."*
- *"I just want to die."*
- *"I'm going to kill myself."*
- *"If...doesn't happen, I'm going to kill myself."*

### Things People Might Do...

- Get a gun or stockpile pills
- Give away prized possessions
- Take more impulsive risks
- Cut themselves or other gestures of self-harm
- Neglect their appearance
- Abuse alcohol and/or drugs
- Isolate themselves/run away/drop out of school
- Show a dramatic change of mood

# Self Care

## While Grieving

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*Citation:* Karla Helbert, LPC

It is important to take care of yourself and nurture your own grieving process so you will be able to help the ones you love to the best of your abilities. Studies show that when you model appropriate, healthy ways to grieve (talking about your grief, showing emotion, continuing to do activities that you enjoy, eating healthy, exercising, etc.), your children are far more likely to follow suit.

But grieving is hard work. It takes time. It takes energy. It is easy for us to provide you of a list of things to do for self-care. It is hard to accomplish them while you are grieving. Most parents are so concerned about their children's grief, that they tend to "set" theirs aside to care for their children. The single most important thing you can do for your family is to take time for yourself, be kind to yourself and your loved ones, and remember you are important too. Remember your (and your family's) grief will soften, in time.

**Even the most difficult of days only have 24 hours in them.**

### Outlets for Adults

**Me time.** Carving out some time for yourself to sit with your feelings and do some processing of your own is extremely important. If your children have difficulty with this, explain why you need this time and tell them where you will be and when you will be back. Take time to go to an exercise or yoga class, write in a journal for 20-30 minutes, go to a support group, meet a friend for lunch, etc. If you need to be by yourself to yell, scream, or cry, that's ok. Keep pillows nearby that you can hit, paper to tear or rip, and objects to stomp on. Time for yourself to release your grief makes you more accessible to your family because you are staying mentally healthy.

**Exercise.** It is important to keep active even if you would rather stay in bed. The endorphins produced by exercise help you to cope with the other stressors during this difficult time. If you can't get away alone, take daily walks with others. This can also be a great time to talk.

**Eating Healthy.** While it is tempting to turn to comfort foods during sad times, the best thing you can do for your body is to drink lots of water, eat a balanced diet, plenty of fruits and vegetables, and cut down on snacking. This will also help with your energy level and ability to cope with grief.

## Outlets for Children

**Me time.** Exercise and eating healthy are also important for children!

**Encourage time to play.** Children often communicate best through their play, so be sure to take time to watch them in imaginative play as well as play with them. You might gain far more insight into what is going on internally than you would through talking alone.

**Continue with routine.** Routine is very important in establishing normalcy and a sense of control. As soon as possible, return to bedtime routines, music lessons or sports teams. You might ask if the child wants to continue routines they did with the deceased, and give them an option of whom to include.

**Creative time.** Encourage children and teens to express their feelings through creative arts: music, art (drawing, painting, clay, etc.), writing in a journal, collage, dance, photography, sports, etc.

**Transitional objects.** Children and teens may want to keep stuffed animals or objects belonging to the deceased close to them for a while. If possible, offer a shirt, picture, special coin, or other object that holds special meaning to help the child keep the one he/she loved close.



# Rituals & Remembrance Activities

*Citation:* Karla Helbert, LPC

Actively remembering the ones we have loved that have died is what keeps them with us always. Children and adults will never “get over” the death of someone they love. However, they can learn to grow through the grief and discover that that love never goes away. (Sims, 1983) While it may be painful to bring up these feelings of grief, especially on birthdays and anniversaries, acknowledging the death and the deceased individual in a positive way truly helps work through those feelings.

- **Make a memory book-** may include pictures, mementos, favorite quotes or sayings, collage, stories from friends of the deceased, etc. that remind the survivors of the loved one who is deceased. It is a resource that allowed the deceased to live on in the memories of those he/she left behind.
- **Light a special candle** on holidays, anniversaries, in church, etc. in honor of the person who died
- **Make a toast** to your loved one at dinner nightly, once a week, or on special occasions.
- **Create a special CD** of music that reminds you of your loved one.
- **Plant a tree** or flowers in your loved one's memory.
- **Make a donation** to a charity that your loved one supported.
- **Visit** your loved one's burial site.
- **Carry something special** that reminds you of your loved one with you. Take it out and hold it when you need to.
- **Do a favorite activity** of the person who died on their birthday and/or on the anniversary of their death (watch his/her favorite movie, go to a favorite place, or listen to a favorite song).
- **Make and eat the favorite meal** of the person who died.
- **Create a family painting** or collage about the loved one who died where each surviving family member contributes a piece. Hang the creation in the house where everyone can see it.
- **Create a shrine or a special area** – a shelf, a room, a corner, table top, etc. in your home, garden, office, etc. that reminds you of your loved one. It may be public for all to see or a private space you for alone.
- **Create your own grief ritual.** You may want to hold your ritual only one time or on a regular basis – daily, weekly, monthly, on special days. You can conduct your ritual alone or with others. To create your ritual you might do things like light a candle, light some incense, read or say aloud an inspirational verse, poem or prayer, chant, sing a song, ring or chime a bell, or play a particular selection of music. Clearly marking the beginning and end of a ritual will help you transition from daily life to the ritual and back again more smoothly. You may want to communicate with your loved one during this ritual either by speaking aloud, writing a letter, or meditating or praying.
- **For anniversaries, holidays and special events – make a plan.** This will help ease your worry and the worries of those around you. You might plan a special outing or visit to the cemetery; or you might plan to get together with friends or family and celebrate the life of your loved one. If the plan changes, that's fine. However, worrying about what might or might not happen is often far worse than what actually happens. For holidays, know your limitations and be accepting of yourself in what you feel you can and cannot do. Let others help you and don't be afraid to make changes – a different time for dinner, different place of worship, or different tradition. You might consider giving a charitable gift in memory of your loved one during a gift-giving holiday to honor their memory and help others in their name.

# How to Help & Support Grieving Families

Citation: Daniel Bagby, BTSR

## Do not say or do

- Don't say *"it's for the best."* How do you know?
- Don't give unsolicited advice – especially on what to feel or how to feel
- Don't remind the survivor of the deceased's faults
- Don't say *"it's all in God's plan."* How do you know what God wanted or why?
- Don't avoid the survivors because you don't know what to say. If nothing else, LISTEN.
- Don't say *"I'm glad she's no longer suffering"* first. Let them say it first.
- Don't interrupt a survivor when they start talking about death/loss. Let them talk.
- Don't say *"I know how you feel"* – unless you've had the same loss.
- Don't criticize or judge.
- Don't say *"it's time to get on with your life," "move on"* or *"get over it."* **Grief takes time – it's a lifelong journey.**

## When a child dies, do not say or do

- Don't say *"At least you have other children."*
- Don't say *"At least you're young; you can try again."*
- Don't say *"God must have needed a little angel up there."*
- Don't say *"Let's not question God's wisdom..."*
- Don't say *"At least you never knew/were never attached to the baby"* (stillbirth/miscarriage)
- Don't say *"Maybe the baby had something wrong with him so it's for the best"*
- Don't say *"please don't cry."* Just sit with them or hug them while they cry. Crying is nothing more than a release of emotion.

## Do say & do

- Say *"I'm sorry," "I care," "I love you,"* (if you do)
- Say *"I'm here to listen if you want to talk."*
- Tell the survivor positive things about their care, love, and the deceased.
- Share happy memories – as appropriate.
- Say *"I know this must be a very difficult time for you. Is there anything you need that I can help with?"*
- Say *"You've been so strong and helpful for your family; if you ever need someone to be strong for you to lean on, I'm here and would be honored to try." "It's ok to let your feelings out anytime with me."*
- Share your feelings of pain and loss for the deceased. This will not make the survivors feel worse. It will let them know you share their grief and that is comforting.
- Say *"It's okay to be angry and frustrated – it's part of loving and totally normal."*
- When they cry, say *"it's okay to cry; I may cry with you."*

# Community Bereavement Support Services

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*The following is a list of some of the available mental health resources in the Greater Richmond Area.*

*Full Circle Grief Center does not necessarily recommend or endorse any of the following providers.*

## **Private Therapists / Adults**

BRENDA BONNUCELLI, LCSW  
3500 Kensington Avenue  
Building E, Suite E3  
Richmond, VA 23221  
(804) 402-0421  
Specializes in grief and loss and uses guided imagery and music in her practice.

LEE R. CARTER, LCSW  
4870 Sadler Road, Suite 300  
Glen Allen, VA 23060  
(804) 205-5050  
Private counseling and psychotherapy services in the Innsbrook area for those ages 16 and older who are struggling with grief or other issues such as divorce, anxiety, and depression. Accepts most major insurance plans and many EAP's. Client is responsible for co-pay.

PATTI COX  
(804) 840-6454  
psheltoncox@aol.com  
Certified in Bereavement Counseling.  
Specializing in Grief Support for Adults, Teens and Children.

PATRICIA FRANCO, PhD, LPC  
7268 Hanover Green Drive, Suite B  
Mechanicsville, VA 23111  
(804) 559-1427

KAREN GILL, LCSW, CT  
Gill Counseling and Consulting  
2025 East Main Street, Suite 200  
Richmond, VA 23223  
(804) 343-9786  
gillcounseling@gmail.com

JILL FITZGERALD, LCSW  
GRIEF RESOURCE CENTER  
3932 Springfield Road  
Glen Allen, VA 23060  
(804) 257-9348  
www.jfitzgeraldgrc.com  
The Grief Resource Center also offers individual and family counseling to those in need, guidance during the grieving process. Specializing in working with parents who have experienced a loss of a child (including perinatal loss), suicide survivors, sibling loss, infertility, and life-threatening illnesses. Fee for services. Appointments only. Many insurances accepted.

KARLA HELBERT, LPC  
3900 Monument Avenue, Suite F  
Richmond, VA 23230  
(804) 892-2782  
karla@karlahelbert.com  
www.karlahelbert.com  
Specializes in working with children and adults on the autism spectrum.

VALERIE MITCHELL, LPC  
Living Well Counseling, LLC  
1145 Gaskins Road, Suite 103  
Richmond, Virginia 23238  
(804) 214-3650  
www.livingwellcounseling.org  
Individual and Family Therapy

GWEN REED, LCSW  
James River Pyschotherapy Associates  
720 Moorefield Park Dr., Suite 202  
Richmond, Virginia 23236  
(804) 272-7611

CAROLYN SHARFF, LCSW  
5931 Harbour Park Drive  
Midlothian, VA 23112  
(804) 639-1136  
Private counseling and psychotherapy sessions for ages 14 and older. Specialties are grief and loss, additions, co-dependency, compulsive behaviors, depression, and anxiety disorders.

KURT STIEFVATER, LPC  
9044 Mann Drive at Shady Grove Rd  
Mechanicsville, VA 23116  
(804) 920-0493  
stiefvaterLPC@yahoo.com  
Provides Individual and Family Therapy

LOWELL THOMAS, LPC, LMFT  
DOMINION BEHAVIORAL HEALTHCARE  
2305 North Parham Road, Suite 3,  
Richmond, VA 23229.  
(804) 270-1124  
Fax (804) 270-2090  
www.dbhwestend.com  
Individual, Family and Grief Therapy/Support Group for adults, children, and families. DBH also has psychiatrists who specialize in working with all ages

## **Private Therapists / Children & Teens**

DR. ANNIE READY COFFEY, PhD  
Arts for Replenishment and Change  
2800 Patterson Ave, Suite 303  
Richmond, Virginia 23221  
(804) 305-2295  
Counseling for children 12 years  
and older as well as adults. Uses the cre-  
ative art therapies to facilitate expression of  
thoughts and feelings.

BRUCE HAMMOND, LCSW  
Westhampton Family Psychologists  
1503 Santa Rosa Road, Suite 105 Rich-  
mond, VA 23229  
(804) 673-0100  
www.wfphelp.com

KARLA HELBERT, LPC  
3900 Monument Avenue, Suite F  
Richmond, VA 23230  
(804) 892-2782  
karla@karlahelbert.com

HELEN HENRICH, LCSW  
Mechanicsville, VA.  
(Tues and Sat appointments only)  
(804) 335-6233  
www.helenhenrichlcsww.com  
Trained in EMDR for those dealing with  
traumatic death

BECKY JACOBSON  
Art Therapist and Counselor  
(804) 482-1840  
becky@thecreativeartspace.com  
Works with children, teens, and adults in  
individual and group settings

NIKOLE JIGGETTS, LCSW, RPT  
Replay Counseling Center  
Registered Play Therapist  
555 South Lake Blvd, Suite C4  
Richmond, VA 23236  
(804) 516-4684

JOY MORENE, LPC  
Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor  
Child, Teen, Adult, and Family Therapist  
14 S Auburn Ave  
Richmond, Virginia 23221  
(804) 767-2431

KATHLEEN O'KEEFE, LCSW  
4920 Millridge Parkway East  
Suite 206 Midlothian, VA 23112  
(804) 928-4623

DR. TOM TERRACIANO, PhD  
West End Family Counseling  
3932 Springfield Road  
Glen Allen VA 23060  
(804) 747-8300

DR. TONY VITELLO, PhD  
Psychologist  
8401 Patterson Ave. Suite 102  
Richmond, VA 23229  
(804) 741-1177

TRACY WHITAKER, LCSW, RPT-S  
Registered Play Therapist-Supervisor  
320 Hull St., Studio 164  
Richmond, VA 23224  
www.hearttreearts.com  
(804) 652-9315

## **Counseling Agencies & Practices**

CHILDSAVERS  
Guidance Clinic (outpatient therapy  
services) and Trauma Response  
200 N. 22nd Street  
Richmond, VA 23223  
(804) 644-9590  
www.childsavers.org

COMMONWEALTH CATHOLIC  
CHARITIES  
Individual counseling  
1512 Willow Lawn Dr  
Richmond, VA 23230  
(804) 285-5900  
www.cccofva.org

COMMONWEALTH COUNSELING  
Individual counseling and evaluations  
Hickory Park Office Complex.  
5213 Hickory Park Drive, Suite A  
Glen Allen, VA 23059  
(804) 237-8030  
www.commonwealthcounseling.com

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES  
6718 Patterson Ave  
Richmond VA  
(804) 282-5644  
www.jfsrichmond.org  
(804) 285-4121  
www.commonwealthassessment.com

PATTERSON COUNSELING CENTER  
Individual and Family Counseling  
6722 Patterson Ave Suite A  
Richmond, VA 23226  
(804) 282-4000

THE RICHMOND AREA CENTER FOR  
PSYCHOTHERAPY AND COUNSELING  
Individual and Family Counseling  
5315 Cutshaw Ave  
Richmond, VA 23226  
(804) 282-1331

YWCA MARRIAGE AND FAMILY  
COUNSELING  
6 N 5th Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
(804) 643-6761

Full range of outpatient mental health and  
psychological services, including Individual,  
Family, and Group Psychotherapy

## **Mental Health and Social Services**

Contact your local government fund-  
ed services (usually fees based on  
sliding scale):  
Henrico: (804) 727-8500  
Hanover: (804) 365-4200  
Chesterfield: (804) 768-7203  
Goochland/Powhatan: (804) 403-5922  
Richmond: (804) 819-4000  
Central Virginia: (434) 948-4831

*If not listed above, find contact infor-  
mation for your local Department of  
Behavioral Health and Developmental  
Services at:*

*[http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/SVC-  
CSBs.asp#cs](http://www.dbhds.virginia.gov/SVC-CSBs.asp#cs) or dial 2-1-1 in  
Virginia for referrals.*

# Crisis Hotlines, 24 hours

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Lifeline- National .....	1-800-273-TALK
Youth Crisis Hotline .....	1-800-448-4663
First Candle/National SIDS Hotline.....	1-800-221-7437
Charles City/New Kent.....	804-966-5959
Chesterfield .....	804-748-6356
Goochland.....	804-556-3716
Hanover.....	804-365-4200
Henrico.....	804-261-8484
Powhatan .....	804-598-2697
Richmond.....	804-819-4000
Family Life Teen Crisis Line.....	804-329-0079
Disaster Distress Helpline .....	1-800-985-5990

The nation’s first permanent hotline dedicated to providing disaster crisis counseling. This free, confidential, and multi-lingual crisis support service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via phone and SMS (Text “TalkWithUs” to 66746 or for Spanish-speakers, Text “Hablamos” to 66746) for anyone experiencing psychological distress as a result of tragedy.

# Bon Secours Specialists, Psychiatry & Neurology

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BEHAVIORAL HEALTH GROUP  
(OUTPATIENT)  
1510 North 28th St.  
Medical Office Building, Suite 101  
Richmond, VA 23223  
(804) 371-1670  
Sultan A. Lakhani, MD  
Paula Allocca, RN, PhD, PMHNP  
Rebecca Sherard, LCSW

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES  
(INPATIENT)  
1500 North 28th St.  
Third Floor  
Richmond, VA 23223  
(804) 371-1675  
Bruce R. Stevens, MD

BON SECOURS BEHAVIORAL  
HEALTH GROUP AT ST. MARY'S  
(OUTPATIENT)  
5855 Brema Rd.  
MOB North, Suite 404  
Richmond, VA 23226  
(804) 287-7788  
Rashida Gray, MD  
Durre Khan, MD  
Tara A. Crisinati, MS, PMH, NP/CNS-BC

BON SECOURS BEHAVIORAL  
HEALTH GROUP AT ST. MARY'S  
(INPATIENT)  
5801 Brema Rd.  
7 West Behavioral Health  
Richmond, VA 23226  
(804) 287-7836  
Rashida Gray, MD  
Tara A. Crisinati, MS, PMH, NP/CNS-BC

BON SECOURS BEHAVIORAL  
HEALTH GROUP AT MEMORIAL  
REGIONAL (OUTPATIENT)  
8220 Meadowbridge Rd.  
MOB I, Suite 308  
Mechanicsville, VA 23116  
(804) 325-8882  
Alla Lerner-Brandon, MD  
Sultan A. Lakhani, MD  
Laurie Klatt, LCSW

## Bon Secours Bereavement Center

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CONTACTS  
Bon Secours Bereavement Center  
7229 Forest Ave, Highlands II/Building A  
Suite 108, Richmond, VA 23226  
(804) 433-4710  
[bereavement@bshsi.org](mailto:bereavement@bshsi.org)

STAFF CONTACTS  
Gwen Reed, LCSW, Grief Counselor  
Drew Burrichter, MA, BCC, Manager  
Brenda Bonuccelli, LCSW, Grief Counselor  
Trish Kush, Bereavement Assistant

Bon Secours Hospice is committed to helping families heal after the death of a loved one. Services are provided by Bon Secours Hospice staff, Master level interns and trained volunteers. Our services are open to the community as space allows. Please note that none of our programs are drop in events.

### **The Bereavement Center offers:**

1. Bi-yearly "Service of Remembrance and Celebration" in the Spring and Fall.
2. Monthly Workshops: Tuesday Workshops meet at the Bereavement Center and provide information about common themes in particular losses and the opportunity to share with others. To register, call Trish Kush. Space is limited.
3. Eight Week Support Groups: Designed for those who experienced their loss 3 to 18 months ago. Monday and Thursday groups are based on Understanding Your Grief by Alan Wolfelt, PhD, and teach a variety of coping skills. Books and journals are provided. Register early with Gwen Reed, as groups are limited to 10 participants and fill up quickly.

# Full Circle Grief Center

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## **FULL CIRCLE GRIEF CENTER**

Full Circle offers 8-week family counseling groups, youth outreach groups in the schools and local non-profit organizations, perinatal loss groups, suicide loss groups, child loss groups, and various community educational opportunities.

10611 Patterson Avenue, #201  
Richmond, VA 23238  
(804) 912-2947  
[www.fullcirclegc.org](http://www.fullcirclegc.org)

*For information about programs, the staff contacts are listed below:*

### **Executive Director:**

Allyson Drake, M.Ed.,  
[allyson@fullcirclegc.org](mailto:allyson@fullcirclegc.org)

### **Family Hands On Healing Groups:**

Stacia Macklin, LCSW  
[stacia@fullcirclegc.org](mailto:stacia@fullcirclegc.org)

### **Youth Outreach in Schools/Community Organizations:**

Jen Radgowski, M.Ed.  
[jen@fullcirclegc.org](mailto:jen@fullcirclegc.org)

### **Adult Outreach (Suicide, Perinatal, Child Loss Groups):**

Blayre Gottwald, MSW  
[blayre@fullcirclegc.org](mailto:blayre@fullcirclegc.org)

### **Educational Programs:**

Elaine Minor, M.Ed.  
[elaine@fullcirclegc.org](mailto:elaine@fullcirclegc.org)

### **Individual Consultations/Referrals:**

Britt Cowart, LCSW  
[britt@fullcirclegc.org](mailto:britt@fullcirclegc.org)

# Hospices

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## **ASERACARE HOSPICE**

Bereavement Support  
Father John Ayres, MA  
(804) 282-4364

## **CRATER COMMUNITY HOSPICE**

Patti Cox, Bereavement  
Coordinator (804) 840-6454  
3916 S. Crater Road  
Petersburg, VA 23805  
[www.cratercommunityhospice.org](http://www.cratercommunityhospice.org)

## **HOSPICE OF VIRGINIA**

[www.hospiceva.com](http://www.hospiceva.com)  
Bereavement Coordinator,  
(804) 281-0451 or 1-800-501-0451  
Email: [info@americanhospice.com](mailto:info@americanhospice.com)  
Provides compassionate, comprehensive palliative care to persons within life-limiting illnesses who reside within our service area at no charge. Our focus is to give physical, emotional, and spiritual support to our patients and their families. We strive to maximize their comfort and autonomy, while conserving resources. We believe in

the dignity of the individual, the sanctity of the family and the beauty of the human spirit. Hospice of Virginia offers bereavement education, support groups for adults, and limited one-on-one counseling as appropriate and available.

## **NEW CENTURY HOSPICE**

(804) 353-2702 or  
(877) 274-7329  
Offers a variety of grief and bereavement services and support

## **NOAH'S CHILDREN PEDIATRIC**

Palliative and Hospice Care  
Beth Smith (804) 287-7686  
Noah's Children's purpose is to ensure quality of life and dignity of death for children with life-threatening illnesses, providing compassionate support to their families as they navigate this journey. Services are available in the home beginning with diagnosis through bereavement, from prenatal through newborn, infancy, childhood and adolescence.

## **ODYSSEY HEALTHCARE OF RICHMOND**

Big Hearts. Better Care.  
(804) 282-4617  
[www.odsyhealth.com](http://www.odsyhealth.com)  
Our mission is to serve all people at the end of life's journey. Odyssey Hospice offers monthly support groups open to adults, free of charge. Support groups take place the last Thursday of each month from 3-4 PM. In addition, Odyssey Hospice offers Spring and Fall memorial services.

## Other Support Services

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### BRYAN'S OASIS

Hank and Peggy Graeser  
(804) 796-2021, [graeserh@comcast.net](mailto:graeserh@comcast.net)  
A Place of Rest and Refreshment on the Journey Located in Nelson County, VA just off the Blue Ridge Parkway Bryan's Oasis is a mountain retreat, in bed and breakfast style, hosted by Hank and Peggy Graeser, for bereaved parents and families who are otherwise emotionally healthy, not in crisis, and not physically handicapped. We offer Bryan's Oasis free of charge in response to the healing presence of God in our lives.

### FORT LEE SURVIVOR OUTREACH SERVICES

Robyn Fuller (804) 734-6445  
[robyn.fuller@us.army.mil](mailto:robyn.fuller@us.army.mil)  
A part of Fort Lee Army Community Service, Survivor Outreach Services is a program demonstrating the Army's commitment to Survivors of Army Soldiers. Using a holistic and multi-agency approach to deliv-

ering services, SOS provides Survivors with benefits coordination, financial counseling, and the long-term support counseling that is specific to the individual and family grief process. SOS also conducts outreach necessary to determine the diverse needs of all who are touched by the loss of a Soldier.

### LIFENET DONOR FAMILY SERVICES (800) 847-7831 or

[www.HealingTheSpirit.org](http://www.HealingTheSpirit.org)  
Provides support services to grieving donor families (adults and children) to help them on their journey of healing. Families often find meaning in the midst of a tragedy when a loved one's organs and tissues are used to save or enhance the lives of others. LifeNet Health helps to honor the lives of loved ones with friends and family. Find LifeNET activities designed to help donor families in their journey from intense grief to healing and, finally, peace in their lives.

### PATHLIGHT

Pam Bancroft (804) 349-6699  
[www.pathlight.com](http://www.pathlight.com)  
End of Life Doula, Consultant, Certified Bereavement and Grief Counselor, Certified Healing Touch Practitioner

### PET LOSS COUNSELING

The Center for Human-Animal Interaction, VCU School of Medicine  
Contact: Dr. Sandra Baker  
(804) 827-PAWS (7297)

IAMS Pet Loss Support Resource Center at (800)332-7738

## Widow/Widower Support Groups

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### WIDOWED GRIEF GROUP

Elaine M. C. Nowinski (804) 272-7787  
Belinda B. Early (804) 513-5772  
Bereavement support groups for widowed men and women

### WIDOWS PERSONS SERVICES

Karen Miller (804) 350-3604  
Support Group for widows and widowers

### YOUNG WIDOWS OR WIDOWERS, INC.

Carol Gordon, (804) 690-6070  
[www.ywow.org](http://www.ywow.org)

### MORRISSETT FUNERAL AND CREMATION SERVICES

Mary Lou Marple (804) 275-7828  
Support group for widows and widowers



# Camps & Retreats

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## CAMP LIGHTHOUSE

(757) 553-3000

A two-day camp for children ages 5-16 who have experienced the death of a close family member or friend within the past two years, to provide a safe place to share grief and take the steps needed to heal. Offers an Adult Grief Camp as well.

## COMFORT ZONE CAMP

[www.comfortzonecamp.org](http://www.comfortzonecamp.org)

Virginia Intake Coordinator,  
(804) 377-3430

A weekend bereavement camp for kids age 7-17 to help them work through the loss of a parent, caregiver or sibling in an accepting, fun environment with other kids who have

been through similar experiences. Camp is free of cost and offered year-round in Virginia, New Jersey, California and Massachusetts.

## FAMILY RETREAT OFFERED BY FULL CIRCLE, BON SECOURS, AND NOAH'S CHILDREN

For more information, contact Full Circle at (804) 912-2947  
[www.fullcirclegc.org](http://www.fullcirclegc.org)

These three organizations partner to offer a day-long retreat for families grieving the death of a child (perinatal loss-age 18).

## MIKEY'S CAMP

Beth Pile, Bon Secours Hospice

(757) 737-2287

Mikey's Camp provides a supportive environment where children and teens can explore the normal process of grieving and where their self-expression is heard, valued, and honored. The camp is staffed by professional grief facilitators and trained volunteers and held each Fall in the Hampton Roads area.

# Spiritual-Based Organizations

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## BARNABAS COUNSELING

St. Paul's Baptist Church

(804) 643-6177

[Barnabas@myspbc.org](mailto:Barnabas@myspbc.org)

## BENEDICTINE COUNSELING SERVICES

Sister Kathy Persson, OSB, LCSW,

(804) 814-2793

Counseling for grief, trauma, and anxiety/  
depression for couples, individuals, and  
families

## CHRISTIAN COUNSELING

TRAINING CENTER

(804) 358-1343

3602 Floyd Avenue

Biblical-based counseling

## COOL SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH

Jerry and Patsi Deans

(804) 402-2032

[jerry.deans@comcast.net](mailto:jerry.deans@comcast.net)

A peer led group facilitated by two sets of

parents, both of whom have lost children.

The group meets on the 2nd Sunday of every month at 5:00pm at Cool Spring Baptist Church on Atlee Station Road. The group is open to new members anytime and welcomes those suffering from all types of losses. The program consists of 13 sessions spread over 13 consecutive months. There is no charge for services and you do not have to be a member of the church to join the group.

## GRIEF SHARE PROGRAMS

· First Baptist Church in Ashland  
Joyce Parsley, (804) 798-9014

· Immanuel Baptist Church in  
Colonial Heights, (804) 526-3276

· Poplar Springs Baptist Church  
in East End  
Laura McBride, (804) 795-7316

## SISTER'S OF HOPE

Peggy Graeser, (804) 796-2021

[graeserh@comcast.net](mailto:graeserh@comcast.net)

Sister's of Hope is a faith based group of bereaved moms meeting monthly in a member's home. We offer care and support to each other on this hard journey in the Lord's name.

## VA INSTITUTE FOR PASTORAL CARE

(804) 282-8332

## RICHMOND HILL GRIEF

SUPPORT GROUPS

Sandra Gramling, Ph.D, LCP

(804) 783-7903

# Suicide Support Services

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## FULL CIRCLE

Blayre Gottwald (804) 912-2947

[www.fullcirclegc.org](http://www.fullcirclegc.org)

Through a partnership with Bon Secours, Full Circle offers two suicide counseling groups each year. The group will meet for 8 weeks, and is open to any adult grieving the loss of someone due to suicide. There will also be a concurrent children's remembrance group offered during the 8 week group.

## MORRISSETT FUNERAL AND CREMATION SERVICES

Mary Lou Marple (804) 275-7828

or Jo Carol Parkin (804) 677-5605

On-going Suicide Survivor Grief Support Group Meets the 4th Thursday of each month at Chippenham Hospital, 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM

## NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS OF VIRGINIA

Survivor of Suicide Loss

Support Group

(804) 285-1749

[www.namivirginia.org](http://www.namivirginia.org)

Meets 1st Thursday of each month

Monument Heights Baptist Church

5716 Monument Avenue

Richmond, VA 23226

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

## CRISISLINK (DC METRO AREA)

(703) 516-6771

Offers two Survivors Support Groups for individuals who have lost someone to suicide.

One is a group for adults and the other is a similar support group for teens and young adults. These ongoing, monthly groups are designed to help survivors support each other through their complicated grieving

process, and are co-led by mental health clinicians and peer facilitators.

## SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)

# Additional Support Groups

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## DIGNITY MEMORIAL L.I.F.T

(LIVING INFORMATION FOR TODAY)

Kathleen Stull (804) 545-7255

[www.dignitymemorial.com](http://www.dignitymemorial.com)

A social support group out of Woody Funeral Home that gives widowed individuals (adults) the opportunity to socialize with others who share similar feelings and experiences. By hosting organized monthly events such as luncheons, educational seminars and day trips, members have the chance to invest emotional energy in

fellowship. There are no fees or dues to participate and membership is not restricted to those who have been served by Dignity Memorial Providers.

\*L.I.F.T. is for individuals who have moved beyond their initial grief and are ready to look for new beginnings at this stage of their lives.

## HOMICIDE SUPPORT GROUP

Richmond Police Department

Kimberley (804) 646-3862 or

(804) 646-8749

For families who have lost a loved one from homicide. Meets every first Wednesday of the month 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM located at the Richmond Police Headquarters, 1201 West Graham Road.

*Sponsored by: Richmond Police Major Crimes Division, Richmond Behavioral Health and Richmond Commonwealth Attorney's Office.*

# Child Loss Support Services

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## FULL CIRCLE

Blayre Gottwald (804) 912-2947

[www.fullcirclegc.org](http://www.fullcirclegc.org)

In partnership with Bon Secours, Full Circle offers two perinatal loss counseling groups each year for parents/couples who have experienced the death of a baby due to late-stage miscarriage, stillbirth, or death due to prematurity. The closed group will meet for 8 weeks, and is open to any parent grieving the loss of a baby. There will also be a concurrent children's remembrance group offered during the 8 week group.

## HELPING YOU THROUGH YOUR LOSS: HCA SUPPORT GROUP FOR BABY LOSS

(804) 281-5549

This support group is intended for parents and adult family members who are grieving the loss of a baby. This loss includes miscarriage, stillbirth, and an infant death younger than a year old. The group is free of charge and open to the community. Bereavement group is facilitated by a social worker and members will provide peer support. The social worker can assist you in deciding if this group is right for you by calling ahead of time. Participation in all sessions is encouraged, but this is a drop in group (i.e. you are not required to commit to attending every session). First Thursday of every month, 6:45-7:45 PM.

## MOTHERS IN SYMPATHY AND SUPPORT (MISS)

[www.facebook.com/MISSFoundationRVA](http://www.facebook.com/MISSFoundationRVA)

Twitter @MISS\_RVA,

Offers Bereaved Parents Support Group for mothers and fathers enduring the death of a baby from any cause at any time before or after pregnancy.

Every 3rd Monday of the month from 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

1101 Forest Avenue

Richmond, VA 23229

Contact: Karla Helbert, LPC,

[karla.helbert@missfoundation.org](mailto:karla.helbert@missfoundation.org)

Every 1st Thursday of the month from 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

Bon Air Presbyterian Church

9201 West Huguenot Road

Chesterfield, VA 23235

Contact: Jennifer Jurlando, MSW, Facilitator,

[jennifer.jurlando@missfoundation.org](mailto:jennifer.jurlando@missfoundation.org)

## SUBSEQUENT PREGNANCY AFTER LOSS GROUP FROM MISS: RVA

Amy Mercurio, Facilitator,

[amy.mercurio@missfoundation.org](mailto:amy.mercurio@missfoundation.org)

St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

1101 Forest Avenue

Richmond, VA 23229

Every 1st Tuesday of the month from

7:00 PM - 8:30 PM

If you are trying, thinking about trying or currently pregnant after a previous loss.

## PEACE ON EARTH BEGINS AT BIRTH DOULA SERVICES

Jenny Stevens, Professional Doula,

(804) 564-1856

[Doula.PeaceOnEarth@gmail.com](mailto:Doula.PeaceOnEarth@gmail.com)

[www.peacefulbirth4You.com](http://www.peacefulbirth4You.com)

Postpartum Support, Specializing in Traumatic Birth Experiences

## MOTHERS SUPPORTING MOTHERS THROUGH GRIEF

Barbara Taylor (804) 828-5543

## BLILEY'S FUNERAL HOME INTERMENT OF ANGELS

(804) 355-3800

Through a cooperative effort among Richmond area hospitals, Bliley Funeral Home and The Catholic Diocese of Richmond, infants may be buried in Mt. Calvary Cemetery at no cost to the family. Services are generally led by a priest from the Richmond Diocese or a local pastor.

# Other Local Supports

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## FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SYSTEMS, LLC

(804) 762-8716

[www.wesupportfamilies.com](http://www.wesupportfamilies.com)

Family and Community Support Systems, LLC, provides therapeutic and supportive services to individuals and families in the following localities: Chesterfield, Colonial Heights, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, Hopewell, Powhatan, and Richmond City.

Our services include: Mental Health Support Services (for adults - accesses Medicaid funding); Intensive In-home Counseling (for children - accesses Medicaid funding); Supervised Visitation; Parenting Education Classes; CPR Classes and Parent Coaching.

## FAN FREE CLINIC

(804) 358-6343

Medical and mental health care

## VIRGINIA MENTORING PARTNERSHIP

at the Science Museum of Virginia

2500 West Broad Street, 3rd Floor

Richmond, Virginia 23220

(804) 828-1536

Support and links to a variety of mentoring programs in the Richmond area.

# Funeral Homes

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## **RICHMOND CITY**

BRUNSON FUNERAL HOME  
(804) 644-6200  
11 East Franklin Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

## **NORTH SIDE**

ANGELUS CREMATION & FUNERAL  
(804) 262-4430  
3009 Lafayette Ave.  
Richmond, VA 23228

BLILEY'S FUNERAL HOME  
(804) 355-3800  
8510 Staples Mill Road  
or 3801 Augusta Ave  
Richmond, Virginia 23230

MARCH FUNERAL HOME  
(804) 321-4200  
2110 East Kaburmum Ave.  
Richmond, VA 23222

SCOTT'S FUNERAL HOME  
(804) 321-9095  
115 East Brookland Park Blvd  
Richmond, VA 23222

W5 WATKINS AND SON  
(804) 321-1100  
2700 North Ave.  
Richmond, VA 23222

WOODY'S FUNERAL HOMES  
(804) 288-3013  
1771 North Parham Road  
Richmond, VA 23229

## **EAST END**

BILLUPS CHAS J & SONS  
(804) 559-9577  
2500 East Marshall Street  
Richmond, VA 23223

CHILES FUNERAL HOME  
(804) 649-0377  
2100 Fairmont Avenue  
Richmond, VA 23223

DAVIS & HUDDLESTON  
FUNERAL HOME  
(804) 643-1109  
1601 Crump Street  
Richmond, VA 23223

NELSEN FUNERAL HOME  
(804) 222-8601  
4650 South Laburnum Ave.  
Richmond, VA 23231

MARTIN MATEEN FUNERAL HOME  
(804) 236-9739  
1603 Williamsburg Road  
Richmond, VA 23231

RAINEY'S FUNERAL HOME  
(804) 652-0925  
1603 Williamsburg Road  
Richmond, VA 23231

SCOTT LIGHTFOOT FUNERAL HOME  
(804) 643-5332  
3021 N Street  
Richmond, VA 23223

WALTER J MANNING AND SONS  
(804) 643-8738  
700 North 25th Street  
Richmond, VA 23223

## **SOUTH SIDE**

CARLTON T. FUNERAL HOME  
(804) 233-8027  
2200 Hull Street Road  
Richmond, VA 23224

MORRISETT FUNERAL HOME  
(804) 275-7828  
6500 Iron Bridge Road  
Richmond, VA 23234

## **WEST END**

BENNETT FUNERAL HOME  
(804) 359-4481  
11020 West Broad Street  
Richmond, VA 23060

BLILEY'S FUNERAL HOME  
(804) 355-3800  
8510 Staples Mill Road  
or 3801 Augusta Ave.  
Richmond, VA 23230

L.T. FUNERAL HOME CHRISTIAN  
(804) 359-4481  
mickeywatkins00@yahoo.com  
3215 Cutshaw Ave  
Richmond, VA 23230

## **NORTH OF RICHMOND**

C.W. EDWARDS FUNERAL HOME  
(804) 633-5506  
info@cwedwardsfuneralhome.com  
Bowling Green, VA 22427

DABNEY FUNERAL HOME  
(804) 798-8207  
floydjr@dabneyfuneralhome.com  
581 N. Washington Hwy  
Ashland, VA 23005

BEAVERDAM FUNERAL HOME  
(804) 449-6124  
19307 Beaverdam Road  
Richmond, VA 23015

MADDOX FUNERAL HOME  
(540) 635-2773  
105 West Main Street  
Front Royal, VA 22630

**BLILEY'S FUNERAL HOMES***Central*

3801 Augusta Avenue  
Richmond, VA 23230

*Cremation Center*

6900 Hull Street Road  
Richmond, VA 23224

*Chippenhams*

6900 Hull Street Road  
Richmond, VA 23224

*Staples Mill*

8510 Staples Mill Road  
Richmond, VA 23228

**BENNETT FUNERAL HOMES***Central Chapel-* (804) 359-4481

3215 Cutshaw Ave

Richmond, VA 23230

*Chesterfield Chapel-* (804) 639-4975

14301 Ashbrook Pkwy.

Chesterfield, VA 23832

*Hanover/Mechanicsville Chapel*

(804) 746-8665

8014 Lee Davis Road

Mechanicsville, VA 23111

*West Chapel-* (804) 270-6321

11020 W. Broad St.

Glen Allen, VA 23060

**MORRISSETT FUNERAL HOME**

(804) 275-7828

6500 Iron Bridge Rd

N Chesterfield, VA 23234

**NELSEN FUNERAL HOMES**

(804) 222-8601

4650 S Laburnum Ave

Richmond, VA 23231

**WILSON AND ASSOCIATES**

(804)222-1720

5008 Nine Mile Rd

Richmond, VA 23223

**EAST OF RICHMOND****BW WHITE FUNERAL HOME**

(804) 769-3130

20408 King William Road

King William, VA 23086

**LEROY CHARITY FUNERAL HOME**

(804) 829- 2464

5130 John Tyler Memorial Hwy

Charles City, VA 23030

**MARKS BRISTOW FUNERAL HOME**

(804) 443-2210

206 Church Hill Road

Tappahannock, VA 22560

**MONAGHAN FUNERAL HOME**

(804) 427-2000

7300 Creighton Pkwy

Mechanicsville, VA 23111

**OD WASHINGTON FUNERAL HOME**

(804) 443-3127

1404 Tappahannock Blvd.

Tappahannock, VA 22560

**VINCENT FUNERAL HOME**

(804) 538-3274

417 11th St

West Point, VA 23181

**WASHINGTON FUNERAL HOME**

(804) 443-3127

1404 Tappahannock Blvd

Tappahannock, VA 22560

**SOUTH OF RICHMOND****JOSEPH MCMILLIAN FUNERAL HOME**

(434) 292-4343

1826 Cox Road

Blackstone, VA 23824

**JM WILKERSON FUNERAL HOME**

(804) 732-8911

102 South Ave

Petersburg, VA 23803

**PURVIANCE FUNERAL HOME**

(757) 899-2971

11414 General Mahone Hwy

Wakefield, VA 23888

**WEST OF RICHMOND****BENNETT & BARDEN****FUNERAL HOME**

(804) 598-3270

bennettbarden@msn.com

3215 Anderson Highway

Powhatan, VA 23139

**HILLMAN HIX FUNERAL HOME**

(804) 561-2521

16409 Court Street

Amelia Court House, VA 23002

**LACY FUNERAL HOME**

(804) 556-3303

lacyh@verizon.net

**MEALY FUNERAL HOME**

(804) 556-4596

2530 Dogtown Road

Goochland, VA 23063

**MICHAEL W HAWKES****FUNERAL HOME**

(804) 561-5500

15001 Patrick Henry Hwy

Ameli Court House, VA 23002

**NORMAN FUNERAL HOME**

(804) 556-4111

2482 River Road West

Goochland, VA 23062

**VY SCOTT FUNERAL HOME**

(804) 561-2022

14001 Patrick Henry Hwy

Amelia Court House, VA 23002

**WOODWARD FUNERAL HOME**

(540) 967-0085

200 Fredericksburg Ave

Louisa, VA 23093

# Online Grief & Bereavement

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*Citation:* The Bereavement Coalition of Central Virginia

## CHILD LOSS

### COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS

Supports individuals who experience child loss of all kinds. Online support is limited to siblings 18 years and older.

**[www.compassionatefriends.org/Resources/Online\\_Support.aspx](http://www.compassionatefriends.org/Resources/Online_Support.aspx)**

### MISS FOUNDATION

Provides chats and forums for bereaved parents, siblings, grandparents and other family members. Go to **[www.missfoundation.org](http://www.missfoundation.org)** and click 'forums.' Browse as guests anonymously or join with an identifying screen name, sharing as much or as little as you like.

### BEREAVED PARENTS OF USA

**[www.bereavedparentsusa.org](http://www.bereavedparentsusa.org)**

### HEALING HEARTS FOR BEREAVED PARENTS

Holding Out the Light of Hope And the Hand of Friendship to Grieving Parents and Their Family

**[www.healingheart.net](http://www.healingheart.net)**

### IN LOVING MEMORY

1416 Green Run Lane  
Reston, VA 22090

Dedicated to helping parents cope with the death of their only child or all their children. Offers national conference and telephone support.

**[www.inlovingmemoryonline.org](http://www.inlovingmemoryonline.org)**

### PARENTS OF MURDERED CHILDREN 1-800-818-7662

Only national self-help organization dedicated solely to the aftermath and prevention of murder. POMC makes the difference through ongoing emotional support, education, prevention, advocacy, and awareness.

**[www.pomp.com](http://www.pomp.com)**

### SHARE: PREGNANCY AND INFANT LOSS SUPPORT, INC.

Perinatal or neonatal loss

**[www.nationalshare.org](http://www.nationalshare.org)**

### CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL AT THE EDGARTOWN LIGHTHOUSE

Provides numerous resources for bereaved parents.

**[www.childrenslighthousememorial.org](http://www.childrenslighthousememorial.org)**

### TWINLESS TWINS

Provides support for twins and other multiples who have lost their twin due to death or estrangement at any age. The unique aloneness felt can best be understood by another twinless twin.

**[www.twinlesstwins.org](http://www.twinlesstwins.org)**

## GENERAL GRIEF

### HELLO GRIEF

Provides information and resources about grief, in order to break through the current culture of avoidance that surrounds death. Hello Grief addresses bereavement head-on for those who are helping others cope, as well as those who need support on their own personal journey with grief.

**[www.hellogrief.org](http://www.hellogrief.org)**

### GRIEF SHARE

GriefShare seminars and support groups are led by people who understand what you are going through and want to help. You'll gain access to valuable GriefShare resources to help you recover from your loss and look forward to rebuilding your life.

**[www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org)**

### GRIEF WATCH

Provides bereavement resources, memorial products, education, and links that can help you through your personal loss.

**[www.griefwatch.com](http://www.griefwatch.com)**

### THE LOSS OF A PARENT

A resource for teens that have lost one or both of their parents.

**[www.thelossofaparent.com](http://www.thelossofaparent.com)**

### GRIEVING CENTER

A web-based television channel for those who have lost loved ones.

**[www.grievingcenter.org](http://www.grievingcenter.org)**

#### HEALING THE SPIRIT

Resources for coping with the death of a loved one.

**[www.HealingTheSpirit.org](http://www.HealingTheSpirit.org)**

#### MOTHERS AGAINST DRUNK DRIVING (MADD)

National office will refer victims of drunk driving crashes to their nearest local chapter. If one is not available, telephone counselors will offer guidance and support. 1-800-GET-MADD (438-6233).

**[www.madd.org](http://www.madd.org)**

#### AMERICAN HOSPICE FOUNDATION

**[www.americanhospice.org/grief-center-mainmenu-45](http://www.americanhospice.org/grief-center-mainmenu-45)**

#### NATIONAL CHILD TRAUMATIC STRESS NETWORK (sudden loss)

**[www.nctsn.org](http://www.nctsn.org)**

#### DOUGY CENTER

**[www.dougy.org](http://www.dougy.org)**

#### ABOUT OUR KIDS

(section on attending funerals/ memorials)

**[www.aboutourkids.org/articles/attending\\_funerals\\_or\\_memorials\\_services](http://www.aboutourkids.org/articles/attending_funerals_or_memorials_services)**

#### SCHOLASTIC

**[www.scholastic.com/childrenandgrief](http://www.scholastic.com/childrenandgrief)**

### LOSS FROM SUICIDE

#### AMERICAN FOUNDATION FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

**[www.afsp.org](http://www.afsp.org)**

#### AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SUICIDOLOGY

**[www.aas.org](http://www.aas.org)**

#### SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE

1(800) 273-TALK (8255)

**[www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org)**

### FOR KIDS

#### NATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR GRIEVING CHILDREN

**[www.childrengrieve.org](http://www.childrengrieve.org)**

#### CREATIVE HEARTWORK

Organization that combines the grief process and creative expression

**[www.creativeheartwork.org](http://www.creativeheartwork.org)**

#### KIDSAID

A site for children to express their grief through art and writing

**[www.kidsaid.com](http://www.kidsaid.com)**

#### CHILDREN'S GRIEF & LOSS ISSUES

Books to help children cope with loss

**[www.childrensgrief.net](http://www.childrensgrief.net)**

### REMEMBRANCE

#### FULL CIRCLE MEMORY WALL

An online memory wall to share pictures, quotes, and memories of your loved one.

**[www.fullcirclegc.org/memorywall](http://www.fullcirclegc.org/memorywall)**

#### 1000 MEMORIES

A place to record and share the story of a loved one's life.

**[www.1000memories.com](http://www.1000memories.com)**

#### THE HEALING GARDEN

A child web page with interactive activities to help children deal with their grief and loss through creative expression and companion interaction.

**[www.healingthespirit.org/childs-place.php](http://www.healingthespirit.org/childs-place.php)**

# Resource List

## for Children 4-8 Years Old

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*When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to Understanding Death* by Laurie and Marc Brown

*I Miss You: A First Look at Death* by Thomas and Harker

*Badger's Parting Gifts* by Susan Varley

*Where's Jess: For Children who have a Brother or Sister Die* by Marvin and Joy Johnson

*The Empty Place: A Child's Guide Through Grief* by Roberta Temes

*I Had a Friend Named Peter - Talking to Children About the Death of a Friend* by Janice Cohn

*What's Heaven?* by Maria Shriver

*Water Bugs and Dragonflies: Explaining Death to Young Children* by Doris Stickney

*Don't Despair on Thursdays!: The Children's Grief-Management Book* (The Emotional Impact Series)  
Written by Adolph Moser, Illustrated by David Melton

*The Fall of Freddie the Leaf* by Leo Buscaglia

*Lifetimes: The Beautiful Way to Explain Death to Children* by Bryan Mellonie

*Can you Hear Me Smiling?* by Aariane R. Jackson and Leigh Lawhon

*I Found a Dead Bird: A Guide to the Cycle of Life and Death* by Jan Thorill

*Part of me Died, Too: Stories of Creative Survival Among Bereaved Children and Teenagers* by Virginia Lynn Fry

*The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst

*What on Earth Do You Do When Someone Dies?* by Trevor Romain

*When People Die* by Sarah LeVete



# Resources for Children 9-12 Years Old

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*Tear Soup* by Pat Schweibert

*Gentle Willow: A Story for Children About Dying* by Joyce Mills

*The Dragonfly Secret: A Story of Boundless Love* by Clea Adams and Barbara Gibson

*The Snowman: A Book About Children and Grief* by Robert Vogel

*Good Grief: A Kids Guide for Dealing with Change and Loss* by Kim Frank

*Sad Isn't Bad* by Michaelene Murphy

*The Magic Moth* by Virginia Lee

*Healing Your Grieving Heart: For Kids* by Alan D. Wolfelt

*But I Didn't Get to Say Goodbye* by Barbara Rubel

*Our Dad Died: The True Story of Three Kids Whose Lives Changed* by Amy Dennison, Allie Dennison and David

# Resources for Adults

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*Guiding your Child Through Grief* by James P Emswiler and Mary Ann Emswiler

*Healing your Grieving Heart* by Alan D. Wolfelt

*Healing a Child's Grieving Heart* by Alan D. Wolfelt

*Understanding Your Grief: Ten Essential Touchstones for Finding Hope and Healing Your Heart* by Alan D. Wolfelt

*Children and Grief: When a Parent Dies* by J. William Worden

*Help Me Say Goodbye: Activities for Helping Kids Cope When a Special Person Dies* by Janis Silverman

*Talking With Children About Loss* by Maria Trozzi

*The Mourning Handbook: the Most Comprehensive Resource Offering Practical and Compassionate Advice on coping with All Aspects of Death and Dying* by Helen Fitzgerald

*Grief in Children: A Handbook for Adults* by Dyregrov and Yule

*I'm Grieving as Fast as I can: How Young Widows and Widowers Can Cope and Heal* by Linda Feinberg

*The Grieving Child: A Parent's Guide* by Helen Fitzgerald and Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

*Healing the Bereaved Child: Grief Gardening, Growth Through Grief and Other Touchstones for Caregivers* by Alan D. Wolfelt

*Bereaved Children and Teens: A Support Guide for Parents and Professionals* by Earl Grollman

*The Grieving Garden: Living with the Death of a Child* by Suzanne Redfern

*Alec's Legacy* by Frank Robinson

*Finding Your Own Way to Grieve: A Creative Activity Workbook for Kids and Teens on the Autism Spectrum* by Kayla Helbert, LPC

*What Do We Tell the Children?* by Schaefer and Lyons

*Raising an Emotionally Healthy Child when a Parent is Sick* by Paula Rauch and Anna Muriel

*Talking About Death: A Dialogue Between Parent and Child* by Early A. Grollman

# Serious Illness

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*How to Help Children Through a Parent's Serious Illness* by Kathleen McCue

*Gentle Willow: A Story for Children about Dying* by Joyce Mills

# Loss of a Child

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*The Worst Loss* by Barbara D. Rosof

*I Wasn't Ready to Say Goodbye* by Brook Noel and Pamela D. Blair

*Help Your Marriage Survive the Death of a Child* by Paul C. Rosenblatt

*Gone but not Lost: Grieving the Death of a Child* by David W. Wiersbe

*Grieving: Our Path back to Peace* by James R White

*A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows through Loss* by Jerry Sittser

# Art Journals / Workbooks

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*When Someone Very Special Dies* by Marge Heedgaard

*When Someone has a Very Serious Illness* by Marge Heedgaard

*How I Feel: A Coloring Book for Grieving Children* by Alan Wolfelt

*Fire in My Heart, Ice in My Veins* by Centering Corporation

*Good Grief for Kids* by Katherine Zotovich

*Angel Catcher: A Journal of Loss and Remembrance* by Kathy and Amy Eldon

# Pet Loss

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*The Tenth Good Thing about Barney* by Judith Viorst

*The Forever Dog* by Bill Cochran

*When a Pet Dies* by Fred Rogers

# Suicide Resources

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## General Resources

*After Suicide Loss: Coping with Your Grief* by Bob Baugher, Ph. D., and Jack Jordan, Ph. D

*Black Suicide: The Tragic Reality of America's Deadliest Secret* by Alton R. Kirk, Ph. D.

*Dying to Be Free: A Healing Guide for Families after Suicide* by Beverly Cobain and Jean Larch

*Healing After the Suicide of a Loved One* by Ann Smolin and John Guinan

*Lay My Burden Down: Unraveling Suicide and Mental Health Crisis Among African Americans.*

*Reaching Out After Suicide: What's Helpful and What's Not* by Linda H. Kilburn MSW

*Rocky Roads: The Journeys of Families through Suicide and Grief* by Michelle Linn-Gust, Ph. D

*Silent Grief: Living in the Wake of Suicide* by Christopher Lukas and Henry Seiden

*Why Suicide? Questions and Answers about Suicide, Suicide Prevention and Coping with the Suicide of Someone You Know (Second Edition)* by Eric Marcus

*Suicide of a Child* by Aina Wroblewski

*Suicide Survivors Handbook - Expanded Edition* by Trudy Carlson

*Survivors of Suicide* by Rita Robinson and Phyllis Hart

*The Wilderness of Suicide Grief: Finding Your Way* by Alan D. Wolfelt

*Touched by Suicide: Hope and Healing After Loss* by Micheal F. Myers

*Unfinished Conversation: Healing from Suicide and Loss - A Guided Journey* by Robert E. Lesoine and Marilynne Chopel

## Understanding Suicide and Mental Illness

*An Unquiet Mind: A Memoir of Moods and Madness* by Kay Redfield Jamison

*Darkness Visible* by William Styron

*Demystifying Psychiatry: A Resource for Patients and Families* by Charles Zorumski and Eugene Rubin

*Night Falls Fast: Understanding Suicide* by Kay Redfield Jamison

*No One Saw My Pain: Why Teens Kill Themselves* by Andrew Slaby and Lili Frank Garfinkle

*The Noonday Demon: An Atlas of Depression* by Andrew Solomon

*November of the Soul: The Enigma of Suicide* by George Howe Colt

*Understanding Depression: What We Know and What You Can Do About It* by J. Raymond DePaulo Jr, MD

## Survivor Stories

*A Force Unfamiliar to Me: A Cautionary Tale* by Jane Butler

*An Empty Chair: Living in the Wake of Sibling's Suicide* by Sara Swan Miller

*A Special Scar: The Experience of People Bereaved by Suicide* by Alison Wertheimer

*Before Their Time: Adult Children's Experiences of Parental Suicide* by Mary and Maureen Stimming

*Blue Genes: A Memoir of Loss and Survival*

*History of a Suicide: Me and My Sister's Unfinished Life* by Jill Bialosky

*In Her Wake: A Child Psychiatrist Explores the Mystery of Her Mother's Suicide* by Nancy Rapport

*My Son...My Son: A Guide to Healing After Death, Loss or Suicide* by Iris Bolton and Curtis Mitchell

*Never Regret the Pain: Loving and Losing a Bipolar Spouse* by Sel Erder Yackley

*No Time to Say Goodbye: Surviving the Suicide of a Loved One* by Carla Fine

*Remembering Garrett: One Family's Battle with a Child's Depression* by US Senator Gordon H. Smith

*Sanity & Grace: A Journey of Grief After Suicide* by Beryl Glover

*The Suicide Index: Putting my Father's Death in Order* by Joan Wickersham

*The Gospel According to Josh: A 28 Year Gentile Bar Mitzvah* by Josh Rivedal

## Helping Children through Suicide Loss

*After a Parent's Suicide: Helping Children Heal* by Margo Requarth

*After a Suicide: A Workbook for Grieving Kids* available through The Dougy Center

*But I Didn't Say Goodbye: For Parent's and Professionals Helping Child Suicide Survivors* by Barbara Rubel

*Child Survivors of Suicide: A Guidebook for Those who Care for Them* by Rebecca Parkin and Karen Dune-Maxim

*My Uncle Keith Died* by Carol Ann Loehr

*Someone I Love Died by Suicide: A Story for Child Survivors and Those Who Care For Them* by Doreen Cammarata

*Understanding Suicide, Supporting Children* available through The Dougy Center

## For Adolescents Touched by Suicide

*After* by Francis Chalifour

*After a Suicide: Young People Speak Up* by Susan Kuklin

## For Men

*Men & Grief: A Guide for men Surviving the Death of a Loved One and a Resources for Caregivers and Mental Health Professionals*  
by Carol Staudacher

*Men Don't Cry... Women Do: Transcending Gender Stereotypes of Grief* by Terry L Martin

*Real Men Do Cry: A Quarterback's Inspiring Story of Tackling Depression and Surviving Suicide Loss*  
by Eric Hipple with Dr. Gloria Horsley and Dr. Heidi Horsley

*Swallowed by a Snake: The Gift of the Masculine Side of Healing* by Thomas R. Golden

*When a Man Faces Grief/ A Man You Know Is Grieving: 12 Practical Ideas to Help You Heal from Loss*  
by Thomas Golden and James Miller

*When Suicide Comes Home: A Father's Diary and Comments* by Paul Cox

## For Clinicians

*For Clinicians Dead Reckoning: A Therapist Confronts His own Grief* by David C. Treadway

*Grief After Suicide: Understanding the Consequences and Caring for the Survivors* by John R. Gordon

*Suicide and It's Aftermath: Understanding and Counseling the Survivors* by Edward Dunne

*Therapeutic and Legal Issues for the Therapists Who Have Survived a Client Suicide: Breaking the Silence* by Kayla Miriyam Weiner

*When a Man Faces Grief/ A Man You Know Is Grieving: 12 Practical Ideas to Help You Heal from Loss*  
by Thomas Golden and James Miller

*When Suicide Comes Home: A Father's Diary and Comments* by Paul Cox

# Perinatal Loss Resources

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*Empty Cradle, Broken Heart: Surviving the Death of Your Baby* by Deborah Davis

*Pregnancy After a Loss* by Carol Lanham

*Grieving Fathers: To The Brink and Back* by Kelly Farley

*An Exact Replica of a Figment of My Imagination: A Memoir* by Elizabeth McCracken

*Losing Malcolm: A Mother's Journey Through Grief* by Carol Henderson

*Heaven is Real: A Little Boy's Astounding Story of his Trip to Heaven and Back* by Todd Burpo

*Life Touches Life: A Mother's Story of Stillbirth and Healing* by Lorraine Ash

*Still - A Collection of Artwork and Honest Writings from the Heart of a Grieving Mother* by Stephanie Page Cole

*The Lovely Life* - [glowinthewoods.com](http://glowinthewoods.com)

*Free to Grieve* by Maureen Rank

*Grieving the Child I Never Knew* by Kathey Wunnenburg

*Life After Loss* by Bob Deits

*Stillborn, The Invisible Death* by John DeFrain

*Father Along: The Writing Journey of Thirteen Bereaved Mothers* by Carol Henderson

*Closer to the Light* by Melvin Morse

*The Still Point of the Turning World: A Mother's Story* by Emily Rapp

*I Will Carry You- The Sacred Dance of Grief and Joy* by Angie Smith

*To Henry in Heaven - Reflections on the Loss of a Child* by Herbert Brokering

*When God Doesn't Answer Your Prayer* by Jerry Sitter

*The North Face of God* by Ken Give

*Dancing in the Rain* by Cindy Schuffle Banger

*Through a Season of Grief* by Bill Dunn and Kathy Leonard

*Gone but Not Lost: Grieving the Death of a Child* by David W. Wiersbe

*Naming the Child: Hope Filled Reflections on Miscarriages, Stillbirth and Infant Death* by Jenny Shroedel

*When god and Grief Meet* by Lynn Eib

*Moments for Those Who Have Lost a Loved One* by Lois Monday Rabey

*Surviving the loss of a Child: Support for Grieving Parents* by Elizabeth .B Brown

*The Power of Memoir: How to Write Your Healing Story* by Linda Joy Myers

*Pregnancy After a Loss* by Carol Cinulli Lanham

*Mothering from Your Center* by Tami Lynn Kent

*Celebrating Pregnancy* by Franche Cox

*Baby Burps* by Amy Sprenger

*Good Grief* by Monica Novak

*Silent Grief* by Clara Hinton

*Our Breaking Choices* by Christie Brooks

*About What was Lost* by Jessica Berger Gross

*Knocked Up Knocked Down* by Monica Murphy LeMoine

*Life Touches* by Lorraine Ash

*Shadow Child* by Beth Powning

*Unspeakable Losses* by Kim Kluger Ben

*Healing After Loss* by Martha Whitmore Hickman

*Journeys: Stories of Pregnancy After a Loss* by Ay Abbey

*To Full Term* by Darci Klein

*Stolen Angels* by Shanee Moore

*Fathers Feel Too* by Andrew Don



# Affirmations & Aspirations

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You can shed tears that she is gone,

or you can smile because she has lived.

You can close your eyes and pray that she'll come back, or you can open your eyes and see all she's left.

Your heart can be empty because you can't see her,

or you can be full of the love you shared.

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday, or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday. You can remember her only that she is gone,

or you can cherish her memory and let it live on.

You can cry and close your mind,

be empty and turn your back.

Or you can do what she'd want:

smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

**David Harkins**

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There is a sacredness in tears. They are not the mark of weakness, but of power. They speak more eloquently than ten thousand tongues. They are messengers of overwhelming grief...and unspeakable love.

**Washington Irving**

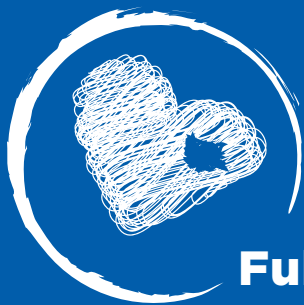
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Healing from grief is the process of

**remembering with  
less pain & more joy**

**Author Unknown**



## **Full Circle** Grief Center

10611 Patterson Avenue

Building 201

Richmond, VA 23238

(804) 912-2947

**[fullcirclegc.org](http://fullcirclegc.org)**