



# Wellness Tips

## Developmental Ages and Possible Reactions to Death

AGE	THINK	FEEL	Do
3-5 years (preschool)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Death is temporary and reversible</li> <li>• Finality of death is not evident</li> <li>• Death mixed up with trips, sleep</li> <li>• May wonder what deceased is doing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sad</li> <li>• Anxious</li> <li>• Withdrawn</li> <li>• Confused about changes</li> <li>• Angry</li> <li>• Scared</li> <li>• Cranky (feelings are acted out in play)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cry</li> <li>• Fight</li> <li>• Are interested in dead things</li> <li>• Act as if death never happened</li> </ul>
6-9 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About the finality of death</li> <li>• About biological process of death</li> <li>• Death is related to mutilation</li> <li>• A spirit gets you when you die</li> <li>• About who will care for them if a parent dies</li> <li>• Their actions and words caused the death</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sad</li> <li>• Anxious</li> <li>• Withdrawn</li> <li>• Confused about changes</li> <li>• Angry</li> <li>• Scared</li> <li>• Cranky (feelings are acted out in play)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behave aggressively</li> <li>• Behave withdrawn</li> <li>• Experience nightmares</li> <li>• Act as if death never happened</li> <li>• Lack concentration</li> <li>• Have a decline in grades</li> </ul>
9-12 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About and understand the finality of death</li> <li>• Death is hard to talk about</li> <li>• That death may happen again, and feel anxious</li> <li>• About death with jocularly</li> <li>• About what will happen if their parent(s) die</li> <li>• Their actions and words caused the death</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerable</li> <li>• Anxious</li> <li>• Scared</li> <li>• Lonely</li> <li>• Confused</li> <li>• Angry</li> <li>• Sad</li> <li>• Abandoned</li> <li>• Guilty</li> <li>• Fearful</li> <li>• Worried</li> <li>• Isolated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behave aggressively</li> <li>• Behave withdrawn</li> <li>• Talk about the Physical aspects of death</li> <li>• Act like it never happened, not show feelings</li> <li>• Experience Nightmares</li> <li>• Lack concentration</li> <li>• Have a decline in grades</li> </ul>
12 years and up (teenagers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• About and understand the finality of death</li> <li>• If they show their feelings they will be weak</li> <li>• They need to be in control of their feelings</li> <li>• About death with jocularly</li> <li>• Only about life before and after death</li> <li>• Their actions and words caused the death</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerable</li> <li>• Anxious</li> <li>• Scared</li> <li>• Lonely</li> <li>• Confused</li> <li>• Angry</li> <li>• Sad</li> <li>• Abandoned</li> <li>• Guilty</li> <li>• Fearful</li> <li>• Worried</li> <li>• Isolated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behave Impulsively</li> <li>• Argue, scream, fight</li> <li>• Allow themselves to be in dangerous situations</li> <li>• Grieve for what might have been</li> <li>• Experience Nightmares</li> <li>• Act like it never happened</li> <li>• Lack concentration</li> <li>• Have a decline in grades</li> </ul>

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