



Tips for Parents

1. Take care of yourself! Even though you may be concerned about the needs of your children, if you don't pay attention to your own needs you won't be good for anyone. So be sure to eat right, get enough sleep and exercise.
2. Feel what you feel! If you are angry, get angry. It's ok to be angry with God, the government, and/or the deceased. Don't canonize your loved one. Grief needs to acknowledge both the good things and the not-so-good things about your loved one in order for resolution. Remember, we mourn the person as they were, not as we wanted them to be. And don't be afraid of tears. They are cleansing and healthy.
3. Be prepared for insensitive remarks. You may even want to generate a list of canned responses like, "I just don't want to talk about it..." or "I know you don't mean to be insensitive but..."
4. Talk about the deceased. Your willingness to do so gives other family members (children and extended family included) permission to do this too. Let you kids know it is okay to cry when sharing memories. It's also okay to laugh.
5. Design remembrance rituals for everyone to share. Consider special days like birthdays, anniversaries, and holidays. Try to include something that specifically reminds you of your loved one and remember to allow a moment of silence for private thoughts and connection.
6. Develop a legacy for your children. Their memories of the deceased may be fragile and may fade with time so encourage them to preserve them in writing, drawing or video.
7. Anticipate potentially difficult times like birthdays, holidays and/or anniversaries. Change traditions if it feels comfortable. Know that unanticipated reminders will still be upsetting and let yourself feel the pain. It's part of working through the grief process.
8. Take strength where you find it – in your faith, your friends, your family, yourself. Avoid alcohol, which can dull the pain but keep you stuck.
9. If you need help know that you can find it. Be sure to seek out someone who has professional experience with grief and trauma. And if you need help for your children, find someone with experience working with children and families. As an educated consumer, you have the right to ask about a professional's experience and credentials before you make an appointment.