

# COPING With LOSS

Everyone deals with death and loss in different ways. There is no right or wrong way to feel or respond to these important issues. Your feelings are unique. Have faith that painful emotions and thoughts will not last forever and your feelings will change with time.

**YOU might experience one or more of these after a loss:**

Fear	Sadness	Feeling alone
Anger	Worry	Thinking about your own death
Guilt	Sense of injustice	Taking more risks
Relief	Numbness	Overwhelmed
Stomach or headaches	Denial	Eating or sleeping changes/feeling tired
Resentment	Difficulty concentrating	Confusion

Be patient with yourself while you are coping with loss. There might be days when you think a lot about the loss and other days when you don't think about it as much or at all. Try the following suggestions to take care of yourself during this time:

- Set realistic goals. Start by doing things to take care of yourself such as eating healthy food and getting enough sleep.
- Keep in touch with your friends. When you are ready, share your feelings with them.
- When you are ready, talk to an adult you trust. This adult can be a family member, teacher, coach, counselor, family friend, clergy member, or health care provider.
- Ask if you have questions about what happened. Tell people you want honest answers.
- Decrease your stress. Do something active like exercise or express yourself through writing or art.
- If you are involved in a funeral, tell your family how you would like to participate.
- If you want, take time to think back on your memories.
- If you like, keep special objects that remind you of the person or place that you miss.
- Get involved in a volunteer activity. Helping others can give you confidence and direct your energy toward a good cause.

**Resources:**

- ♦ Death and Grief. TeensHealth: [www.kidshealth.org/teen/your\\_mind/feeling\\_sad/someone\\_died.html](http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/your_mind/feeling_sad/someone_died.html)
- ♦ Grief and Loss. Go Ask Alice!: [www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/Cat4.html](http://www.goaskalice.columbia.edu/Cat4.html)

*Do you have any comments or questions about this handout? Please contact Adolescent Health Working Group by emailing [feedback@ahwg.net](mailto:feedback@ahwg.net) or calling (415) 554-8429. Thank you.*

Sources:

- 1) Goodman RF. Children and Grief: What They Know, How They Feel, and How to Help. New York University Child Study Center. 2001, <http://www.aboutourkids.org/aboutour/articles/grief.html>
- 2) UCLA School Mental Health Project. Schools Helping Students Deal with Loss: Guidance Notes. 2005, <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/loss.pdf>

