

GRIEVING: AGE AND DEVELOPMENT STAGES

- Infancy:**
- separation issues produces anxiety therefore the baby will cry, whine, eat more or less, experience sleep disturbances therefore regressive behaviour should be expected
 - they have a need for structure, routine, security, physical touch and contact
 - parents who are grieving themselves have decrease in energy therefore often not able to cope themselves and need to get someone who can
- Preschool:**
- explain what "not coming back" means and remember you'll need to repeat it over and over again
 - asking lots of questions... why, why, and more why
remember that this is all part of the process; try not to be frustrated by this otherwise the grieving child will feel shamed
 - watch for "magical thinking" -- that death is reversible
 - reassure that its okay to talk about the death
remember if they don't get information they will create it
 - provide security, safety net
 - be prepared for "zingers" -- questions that take you off guard or poke your own wounded places
- Age 6-10:**
- death may be seen as the "boogy-man" and if there is no support or truth brought into this, it can create nightmares
 - these children can become very frightened therefore regressive behaviour may occur
 - remember that the more they are involved, the more they will be able to cope
 - watch how you say things and how others say things to your children: beware of "angels came and took him away" therefore meaning it'll come back for them or "he's gone for a long sleep" therefore its not safe to sleep.
 - don't protect children from the truth;
discuss everything with them because they can develop more serious signs of grieving ie. a world of fantasy

10 years: - this age can begin to understand biological aspects of death
- they will ask more concrete questions so be sure to stay with the questions asked

Teens: - this is the stage of independence therefore death makes them stand out and makes them very uncomfortable
- if a sibling dies they may have a sense of having to live "up to"
- need to be supported not to take over the deceased role ie. now your the mom or dad of the family
- support work with teen groups; teens often don't talk with adults therefore using other teens may work
- they may get an overwhelming concern for multiple losses; that more of their extended family will die