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**These are a compilation of resources for grief. All are from research in the field or from resources you can look to for answers you might need. I have additional ones on my website.**

**Things not to say to your grief clients or grieving friends and family:**

**Kids:**

Use of words that are not clear about death

Implying that after the death of a parent they need to step into that role

No: God needed another angel

Their loved one is always watching them

Good people die young

They wanted to go home

They will be waiting for you

Linking the death to the child's behavior

There was some kind of plan that included their loved one dying

They are in a better place

You need to be strong

Don't cry and make your adults sad

DO: They loved you and if they had a choice they would not have died

You can always talk to them

It's nice if they come to visit you

You do not have to visit the cemetery/walk up to the casket/be part of the funeral

There was nothing they could do to stop them from dying

It's okay, and normal, to cry when someone dies

### **Adults:**

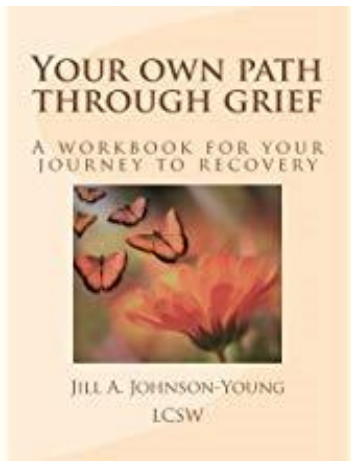
- *Time heals all wounds*
- *You need to put this behind you.*
- *Grief lasts forever*
- *Everything happens for a reason*
- *It was not meant to be.*
- *Why didn't you \_\_\_\_\_ (in regard to the illness or manner of death)*
- *I thought you would be more upset.*
- *He brought this on himself.*
- *Everything happens for a reason.*
- *It is not good to visit the grave so often.*
- *Others have it worse than you.*
- *Are you over her yet? She's been gone a long time.*
- *You must be strong.*
- *You know that he cannot get into heaven until you accept his death.*
- *Why are you still crying?*
- *She wouldn't want you to be so sad.*
- *If you separate his ashes, he will never get to heaven.*
- *You are still young; you can always remarry.*
- *You never really got to know the baby.*
- *At least the other twin lived.*
- *God wanted him more than you.*

- *Heaven needed another angel.*
- *God will never give you more than you can handle.*
- *I know just how you feel.*
- *Don't let the children see your sadness.*
- *You do have other children.*
- *At least she lived a long life, many people die young*
- *He is in a better place*
- *She brought this on herself*
- *There is a reason for everything*
- *Aren't you over him yet, he has been dead for awhile now*
- *You can have another child still. She was such a good person*
- *God wanted her to be with him I know how you feel*
- *She did what she came here to do and it was her time to go*
- *Be strong*
- *You can always have another baby*
- *You are young enough to remarry*
- *God needed another angel*
- *They went to sleep*
- *They wanted to go live with God*
- *I lost my \_\_\_\_\_ too. Let me tell you what helped.*
- *Be glad they are out of pain.*
- *Everything happens for a reason*
- *He ended his life tot spare you pain*
- *It's time to get rid of their stuff*
- *Dating means you don't miss them*
- *He's in a better place*
- *Just be happy he's not in pain anymore.*

- *You'll get married again*
- *"You can always have other children"*
- *At least you have your other children.*
- *for you to get yourself together.*
- *I'm sure it will all be better soon.*
- *God's plans are always the best.*
- *It must have been what He intended.*
- *Don't cry in front of the children.*
- *How are you doing?*
- *They're in a better place.*
- *Please let me know if there's anything I can do for you.*
- *You can always...*

*What you can and should say to adults:*

- *I wish I'd been there- I was uncomfortable with someone dying*
- *I will bring you dinner on XX night.*
- *Let me come over and (do you lawn, bring you groceries, take care of your laundry)*
- *I am here for you. You don't have to talk. I will just be here for you.*
- *I hope the service was what you wanted/needed*
- *I will always remember XXX about your loved one.*
- *You did everything you could with hat you knew*
- *They knew how much you loved them*
- *Let me just sit with you*



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*When Gene Kelly's wife Jeanne Coyne died, Gene withdrew from everyone and shut himself up in a back room of his house. One night, there was a knock at the kitchen door. When Gene didn't answer, the caller kept knocking. "There's nobody home," said Gene. "I know. That's why I came to be with you." When Gene opened the door, it was Fred Astaire. He'd brought sodas and sandwiches. The two of them sat together all night long, without saying a word. Several years earlier, when Fred's wife had died, Gene had done the same thing.*

*(Fred Kelly, Gene's brother told this story to the Arizona Daily Star.)*

## Working with teens and children

Teens and children need honest answers, real words, and to be addressed at their own developmental level.

That means teens should not be expected to look to parents for their support- they should be talking to their peers and other adults. They will need family, but they are developmentally preparing to look to external sources for support.

Both children and teens need to do some of the same finishing- they also need to remember the real person who died. They also need to finish the leftovers, at their level.

Children need reassurance that their other family will not die, and, if they do, what happens to them and their stuff. They need permission to regress in

needing someone to sleep with, having bedtime accidents, and wanting lights on.

Children can become incredibly needy, or grouchy (think tired toddler) or appear to not be feeling or reacting. They also will try to shield adults from having more pain. They will frequently say they want to go visit or be with the person who died, and that needs to be addressed gently but firmly. Children do well with puppet play to talk about the death and their loss in third person. Story books tend to be not direct about death- they should be read with an adult who can offer to answer questions, and be more direct.

They need the person who died, mentioned; movies about dying they can watch and process with you; to see adults crying and being okay with it; the names mentioned at holidays; And not to be criticized for not acting like mini adult grievers. Allow them to be part of the funeral or services, give them grace if they back out.

Teens are moving from child-like to young adults in response to deaths. They need to be assessed for where they are developmentally.

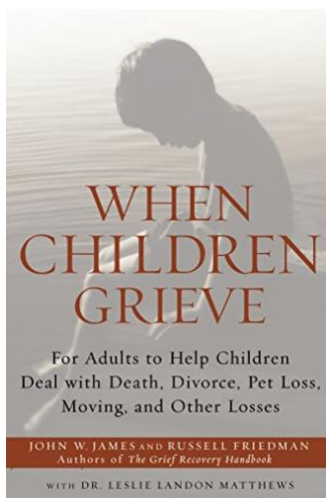
They respond well to writing letter/poems to the person who died. Artwork is useful also.

**Watch for suicidal thoughts and self-harm**

[https://smile.amazon.com/BIC-BodyMark-Temporary-Tattoo-Assorted/dp/B07W2Z3J3H/ref=sr\\_1\\_25?dchild=1&keywords=safe+markers&qid=1589580523&sr=8-25](https://smile.amazon.com/BIC-BodyMark-Temporary-Tattoo-Assorted/dp/B07W2Z3J3H/ref=sr_1_25?dchild=1&keywords=safe+markers&qid=1589580523&sr=8-25)

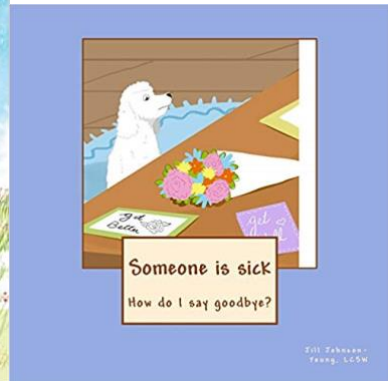
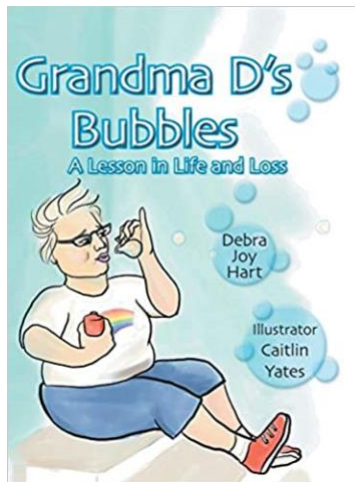


**Markers that can be used to create a diversion in thoughts from self-harm. Teens and young adults (college age) really like these, especially if doing intricate (think mandala) designs.**



<https://m.media-amazon.com/images/I/41IRF7lgJLL.jpg>





## Pet loss

<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/why-we-need-to-take-pet-loss-seriously/>

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/animal-attachment/201702/7-self-care-essentials-while-grieving-the-death-pet>

<https://www.avma.org/resources-tools/pet-owners/petcare/coping-loss-pet>

<http://www.petlosshelp.org/10commonquestions.html>

[https://www.rainbowsbridge.com/grief\\_support\\_center/grief\\_support\\_home.htm](https://www.rainbowsbridge.com/grief_support_center/grief_support_home.htm) : many resources here for pet loss

<https://resources.bestfriends.org/article/pet-loss-and-grief-resources> Many more resources

<https://centerforpetlossgrief.com/>



### **Assessing for unnamed losses at intake:**

When meeting with a new client and looking for unnamed/unrecognized losses, it is helpful to ask:

- Tell me about what happened when deaths occurred when you were a child
- How were pet losses handled?
- How do you describe what a loss is?
- Tell me about your childhood friends you are still in touch with (And why you are not if you don't have any)
- Did you attend funerals as a child?

- What happened to your family's financial stability during the recession?
- Listen for losses from moves; loss of friends; changes in employment (did they maintain ties?); pets (how did those losses happen?); finances; health, illness and disability and what happened with those changes; marriages and divorces; substance use and abuse and treatment, if any; leaving a house of faith; and any others that come up.
- Use a genogram and relationships on a Venn diagram to illustrate who has been and is not in the client's life.
- Use concentric circles to look at who was in the client's life before the loss, and then again afterward. Client is center, then close family, extended, friends, not close friends, etc; use the categories the client describes. That will illustrate secondary losses of people and new people who have entered as support.

## Suicide losses:

<https://suicidology.org/>

Tal Young, I., Iglewicz, A., Glorioso, D., Lanouette, N., Seay, K., Ilapakurtti, M., & Zisook, S. (2012). Suicide bereavement and complicated grief. *Dialogues in clinical neuroscience*, 14(2), 177–186.

Lannen, P. K., Wolfe, J., Prigerson, H. G., Onelov, E., & Kreicbergs, U. C. (2008). Unresolved grief in a national sample of bereaved parents: impaired mental and physical health 4 to 9 years later. *Journal of clinical oncology : official journal of the American Society of Clinical Oncology*, 26(36), 5870–5876. doi:10.1200/JCO.2007.14.6738

Jordan JR. Is suicide bereavement different? a reassessment of the literature. *Suicide Life Threat Behav.* 2001;31:91–102.

Spillane A, Matvienko-Sikar K, Larkin C, Corcoran P, Arensman E. What are the physical and psychological health effects of suicide bereavement on family members? An observational and interview mixed-methods study in Ireland. *The BMJ* 2018 Jan 13;8(1)

Andriessen K, Kryszynska K, Hill NTM, Reifels L, Robinson J, Reavley N, Pirkis J. Effectiveness of interventions for people bereaved through suicide: a systematic review of controlled studies of grief, psychosocial and suicide-related outcomes. *BMC Journal* 2019 Jan 30;19(1):49.

### **Grief support for survivors:**

<https://www.mastersincounseling.org/loss-grief-bereavement.html> Lists of grief support groups for a wide variety of losses

<https://save.org/> : resources, including grief and school based materials

<http://www.supportaftersuicide.org.au/> An Australian organization with some great resources

<http://www.personalgriefcoach.net/> A face page with dozens of specialized suicide grief resources

<https://thelifelinecanada.ca/resources/survivors-of-suicide-loss/> A Canadian site with multiple resources and multiple age-specific child and teen resources

<https://emilymcdowell.com/collections/empathy-cards>

