

IF YOU ARE A TEENAGER

How do you feel when you lose somebody?

At first, it can be scary. You might be in shock or feel numb. You also might feel nothing at all or be confused about your emotions. You might wonder why this had to happen and say it isn't fair. You might feel great sadness or anger. You might feel nothing can fill this empty space and nobody can help you. Maybe you feel alone and want to be by yourself. You need time.

Maybe you feel guilty for something you did or said and now you have regretted it. Maybe you think it's now too late to tell them how much you love them or to apologize. Maybe deep down you fear this will happen to you as well. Maybe you feel odd, your feelings are intense, all mixed-up and keep changing all the time. Maybe you get upset over little things, tear up easily, feel disconnected and don't want to do your homework or go out, and feel unable to be happy with things you used to do. Maybe you have a hard time going to sleep at night or maybe you are having nightmares, while other times you might can't get up in the morning and want to sleep all the time.

Sometimes pain is expressed through our bodies. For instance, your head or stomach might ache or you might feel nauseated, tired and exhausted. Maybe you have lost your appetite or, the exact opposite, you want to eat all the time.

All of these reactions are normal when you lose someone you love.

It's not always going to be like this. Remember there's not "right" and "wrong" way to grieve.

Each experience is unique and each teenager reacts differently.

What could be helpful to me?

Every teenager finds their own way to cope with and express their bereavement.

Other teenagers have told us they felt better by:

- Talking to someone they trust.
- Allowing themselves to cry when they needed it.
- Thinking and talking about the person who died.
- Continuing to engage themselves in extracurricular activities and interests they have.
- Listening to music, going out with friends, going to the cinema.
- Keeping a journal of their thoughts and feelings.

- Writing a letter to the person they lost with all the things they would like to tell them, if they could hear them.
- Making a photo album dedicated to him/her.
- Making a scrapbook with texts, pictures, inscriptions, poems or collages dedicated to the person they lost.
- Making a memory box, which they colored or decorated with shells, stickers or drawings and then used to keep anything related to him/her (glasses, wallet, watch, lighter, worry beads, book, cds, scarf, tie, lipstick, jewelry, toys).
- Making a collection with his/her favorite songs or songs that reminded them of him/her.

If you feel trapped in pain...

If you feel trapped in pain, don't hesitate to seek support from a psychologist who can help you move on with your life.

You can contact Merimna –even anonymously– at +30 210 6463622 or send an e-mail to the following address: merimna-efivoi@ece.ntua.gr

Maybe you need help:

- If you are constantly thinking about your loved one's death and this prevents you from engaging in your daily activities.
- If it's been a long time since you last had fun.
- If you have isolated yourself from your friends and don't speak to anybody.
- If you are experiencing intense stress or feel scared and angry all the time.
- If you keep having nightmares.
- If you are no longer doing well at school, experiencing memory gaps and are unable to concentrate.
- If, at times, you think of hurting yourself or doing something dangerous.
- Remember there's always a way to feel better and there's always someone that can listen to you.

Adolescents talking about their experience

These are a few of 16-year-old Alexandros' feelings regarding his mother's death: sadness, fear, loneliness, anger.

A 14-year-old girl wrote the following lyrics for her beloved father who passed away. She eagerly gave us permission to post them and for that we thank her.

“No matter how painful your absence is, the thought of your love alone is what keeps us strong.”