



Siblings

Additional Information

1

Age Birth - 2

- No understanding of death
- Mindful of the loved one missing
- Possible behaviors may be:
 - Crying
 - Rocking
 - Sleeplessness
 - Thrashing

2

What May Help

- Reassurance
- Hugging or cuddling
- Maintain routines as much as possible
- Meet the child's physical needs
- Include the child in the process of mourning
- Be patient

3

Age 3-5

- May not understand death is permanent
- May see this as temporary or reversible
- Possible behaviors may be:
 - Repetitive questions
 - Intense dreams
 - Crying
 - Fighting
 - Acts as if the death didn't happen

4

What May Help

- Allow safe ways to express their feelings
- When answering questions be truthful and keep the answers simple
- Let he/she cry
- Use reflective listening allowing the child to talk openly
- Include the child in the family's rituals and mourning

5

Age 6-12

- Understand that death is final
- May think that his/her thoughts or actions caused the death
- Thinks about life's milestones without the deceased
- Possible behaviors may be:
 - Acts like the death didn't happen
 - Withdrawal
 - Nightmare/sleep disturbances
 - Aggressive or acting out

6

What May Help Age 6-9

- Answer questions truthfully
- Allow for the child to express their feelings through physical and verbal outlets
- Let the child choose how to be involved in the mourning process
- Find peer support
- Give physical contact
- Make time to be with that child

7

What May Help Age 9-12

- Allow regressive behavior
- Expect and accept mood swings
- Be available to listen and to talk
- Offer physical contact
- Encourage expression of feelings through numerous outlets
- Let the child choose about involvement in death and mourning

8

Age 12 years and up

- Denial
- May sense own impending death
- May utilize spiritual concepts to cope
- His/her words or actions may have caused the death
- Possible behaviors may be:
 - Mood Swings
 - Hides Feelings
 - Impulsive/High risk behaviors
 - Changes in peer groups
 - Changes in eating patterns

9

What May Help Age 12 and Beyond

- Expect and accept mood swings
- Support relationships with understanding adults
- Answer questions truthfully
- Find peer support
- Encourage journaling
- Allow them to choose about the level of involvement in death and mourning
 - Making a scrapbook
- Encourage exercise

10

All Ages, at parent's discretion

- Allow the child opportunities to talk about how they are feeling
- Celebrate the memory of their sibling through walks or yearly celebrations
- A scrapbook (with pictures if available) for them to look back through

11

Books which
may be
helpful



12