

NORMAL ADOLESCENT REACTIONS TO TRAUMATIC LOSS

Sudden death is always painful to understand, and you may experience signs of normal bereavement and stress. These include:

- Difficulty sleeping
- Changes in appetite
- Inability to concentrate
- Absentmindedness
- Irritability
- Isolation
- Guilt
- Fearfulness and worries
- Anger and resentment
- Physical symptoms

Because you have experienced a *traumatic* loss, you may notice that you are responding in these ways, too:

- Avoidance of any reminders of the event
- A feeling that this is not real, disbelief, “numbness”
- Thoughts about the accident that interfere with your activities and your concentration

WHAT YOU CAN DO

It is really important that you take care of yourself during this stressful time. Try to eat some nutritious foods and drink plenty of water so that you do not become dehydrated. Try to follow a regular schedule for sleep or rest when you can. Talk about your feelings and reactions with friends and family members you can trust. Try not to focus too much on the “What if” and the “Why” questions. Protect yourself from any additional stresses that you can avoid.

You will probably start to feel better within a few weeks. If you do not start to feel better, talk to your parents or to an adult at school. If one of your friends does or says something that worries you, please tell an adult. Getting help for a friend could be the most important conversation you ever have.