

Basic Needs of Grieving Teens

Honor

There is no right way or wrong way to grieve.
Honor and respect your teen's own unique way of grieving,
even if it seems at times to be very dramatic.

Attention

Teens need someone who will listen to them without judgment or question.
Consider becoming an "unconditional listener".

Routines

Teens find comfort in having routines. If your family always eats a big breakfast on
Sundays, or goes to visit Grandma, now is not the time to change.

Assurance

Teens need to know that their parents are in control of their own emotions. Of
course, you can express your emotions, but don't go overboard.
Be a good emotional role model by finding your own source of adult support.

Choices

Your teen's world can seem so powerless now.
Show them that you respect their choices.

Boundaries

Although it may seem hard to believe, teens do find safety and support
within reasonable and consistent boundaries.
If your teen's curfew on weekends is 11:00 pm, now is not the time to change it.

Privacy

Allow and respect your teen's need for privacy, but don't ignore warning signs of
what your teen may be doing in private.

Health

Teens need proper food, nutrition, and plenty of sleep.
Since parents usually have little control over this,
look for changes in your teen's appetite or sleep patterns.

Honesty

Be honest and truthful regarding what you tell your teens about the death,
and tell them what you know, as long as it is based upon fact.
Evaluate your knowledge: if there is the slightest chance that it is
based upon a rumor, wait until you have the facts.

Respect for Individuality

Teens need to find their own personal way to memorialize the person who died.
Many teens do this by writing in a journal,
or using some other form of self-expression, such as blogging.

Content adapted from writings by

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