



## GRIEF SUPPORT *of the* ROCKIES

www.griefsupportoftherockies.com

### **Expected Grief Reactions – Kids & Teens**

#### Age 0-2 Years Old

- ❖ Do not understand the finality of death
- ❖ Increased irritability & crying
- ❖ Change eating patterns
- ❖ Change sleeping patterns
- ❖ Can become detached

#### Age 2-5 Years Old

- ❖ Do not understand the finality of death & may ask questions over and over
- ❖ Confused & believe death is reversible
- ❖ Lack words to express grief
- ❖ Act out feelings in behavior & play
- ❖ Experience separation anxiety even after
- ❖ Experience nightmares
- ❖ Display regressive behaviors (toilet training, thumb sucking, bed wetting)

#### Age 6-9 Years Old

- ❖ Begin to understand finality of death
- ❖ Believe death only happens to others
- ❖ Personify death as ghosts or monsters
- ❖ Engage in magical thinking, and may feel they caused death
- ❖ Have strong feelings of grief and loss, expressed more through anger
- ❖ Lack words to express grief
- ❖ Often need permission to grieve, especially boys

#### Age 9-12 Years Old

- ❖ Understand finality of death
- ❖ Experience difficulty concentrating
- ❖ Have curiosity about the physical aspects of death
- ❖ May identify with deceased by imitating mannerisms
- ❖ Have vocabulary to express grief, but often choose not to
- ❖ Need encouragement to express feelings and grieve

#### Age 13-23 Years Old (Adolescents)

- ❖ Have an adult understanding of death
- ❖ Philosophize about life and death & search for meaning of death and life
- ❖ Can express grief, but often choose not to
- ❖ Affects entire life – school, home, relationships
- ❖ May appear to be coping well when they are not
- ❖ Are often thrust into role of comforter
- ❖ Participate in dangerous behavior like drugs and alcohol or reckless driving