

Helping Children and Teens, Today, Tomorrow and Always: Providing Grief support during the Coronavirus



When a family experiences the death of someone important from either COVID-19 or another cause, traditional ways of mourning and receiving support may not be an option as we navigate this pandemic. Here are some suggestions for ways to support grieving kids and teens right now.

How to Help a Grieving Friend or Family Member

While you may not have experienced the death of someone close to you, someone you know may have. During Michigan's Stay Home, Stay Safe initiative, and even following the lifting of restrictions, it may not be possible to offer support the same way you may have prior to the Coronavirus Pandemic.

When you reach out, let them know you are thinking of them. They may feel overwhelmed, so it is helpful to preface and acknowledge that they do not need to respond. Here are some suggestions of ways to support someone you know who is grieving:

- ♥ Connect with the family virtually to share stories about the person. The ability to be with other people, even virtually, who are having the same experience, can be helpful and healing. This could be a phone call, video conference, email, etc.
- ♥ Ask someone within the family or close to them if you can start a meal calendar or have a meal delivered from a restaurant. Please keep in mind that some families may not feel comfortable having food prepared elsewhere right now. It is helpful to ask before sending food their way.
- ♥ Ask what they need from the store next time you make a grocery run.
- ♥ Give gift cards for a grocery store or restaurant that is delivering.
- ♥ Offer to do yard work or outside housework for the family.
- ♥ Check in often as time goes by, as grief lasts a lifetime. People will often reach out in the beginning, but support often declines over time leaving the griever feeling more alone. Again, let them know you do not expect a reply.
- ♥ Recognize that special days are even more important than before. Remember those days and show your support
- ♥ Understand that some grieving families may not want support of this kind, and respect their boundaries. Often times, just recognizing a family's grief and respecting their wishes can be a great show of support.