

# Warning signs and red flags



When an adult is grieving, the signs seem to be apparent. But when it comes to children and teens, the signs of grief and anguish can be masked in various behaviors. It's important to recognize how children are grieving so that you can make sure that they're dealing with emotions in a healthy way.



## SIGNS:

**Clinginess:** Children of all ages may seek extra attention after loss. They may say that they don't want to go to school or ask for help with things that they previously could do on their own. They may cry more and want to be held.

**Sleeping Problems:** Older children might have insomnia or may be experiencing fear, which keeps them from sleeping. Younger children may want to sleep with caregivers.

**Difficulty Concentrating:** Sometimes children of any age have trouble focusing on any particular activity or have trouble making decisions. They may appear to be distracted.

**Developmental Regression:** Children may start wetting the bed or stop sleeping through the night. A small child might even revert to baby talk or want to drink from a bottle again.

**Academic Issues:** Older children and teenagers may struggle with school and may have difficulty completing assignments.

**Changes in Play:** Young children may start talking about death in their pretend play. They may have their stuffed animals, dolls, and action figures pretend to die and come back to life.

**Behavioral Problems:** Children of all ages may display behavioral problems that didn't exist before. They may act out in school or talk back at home.

