



C E N T E R F O R
G R I E F & H E A L I N G

A program of Hospice of the North Shore

Specific Reactions to Sudden Death/Trauma

- Feelings of anxiety, fears, and worries about safety of self and others
- Increased levels of distress
- Increased somatic complaints (whiny, irritable, moody)
- Changes in school performance
- Statements and questions about death and dying
- Asking the same questions over and over again
- Changes in sleep
- Changes in appetite
- Lack of interest in usual activities
- Changes in behavior/increased emotions
- Regression in behaviors
- Hate or anger statements

What Can I Do to Help?

- Reinforce ideas of safety and security.
- Listen to and tolerate your children's retelling of events.
- Use simple, direct terms to describe what happened.
- Children may misunderstand information about the event as they are trying to make sense of what happened (believe things happened that did not happen).
- Do activities that will reinforce the message that one person can make a difference to help and heal. Activities can include drawing pictures and sending cards.
- Provide reassurance to children that uncomfortable feelings will get smaller and easier to handle over time.
- Maintain the family routines – sleeping, eating, and extracurricular activities.
- Provide soothing activities, such as reading books, listening to music, taking a walk, riding bikes etc...

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to call the Center for Grief & Healing at (978) 774 - 5100.