



Grieving Teens

Teens desperately want to feel in sync with their peers. Grieving makes them feel out of sync, odd, or different. They don't fit in as easily. Teens often do catch-up mourning at developmental milestones, i.e., graduation, prom. They may put grieving off for a while, then become very sad, distraught, or angry at these pivotal points.

Developmental Tasks Complicated by Grief for the Teenager:

- **Separating from their families:** If I need you during my grieving, then I cannot separate from you. Feeling vulnerable and needy runs counter to their need to separate from family.
- **Awareness of their own mortality:** Especially if the death is of a friend or sibling. Teens usually feel a fairly strong sense of immortality.
- **Awkward physical development:** They may already have self-esteem difficulties which grief exacerbates.
- **Teens often try to appear more mature than they actually are:** Others may not recognize their emotional needs at this time. They need love and support.
- **Succeeding in school and at work:** This often gets compromised after a major loss. May affect self-esteem and increase stress and pressure.
- **Raging hormones:** Exacerbates the emotional turmoil of a death or loss.

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