

# **School Parenting Information Sheet**

## **Grief**

### **Symptoms**

1. Lack of appetite, nightmares, restlessness, inability to concentrate, irritability, depression or social withdrawal
2. Marked drop in school grades, increase in angry outbursts, or clinging to parents
3. Feelings of guilt about being able to do something to prevent the loss, or regrets over how they acted to the person who died
4. Avoidance of talking about the loss

### **Possible Causes**

1. Loss of contact with person because of death
2. Loss of contact with parent because of parent's incarceration
3. Loss of meaningful contact with parent due to parent's emotional abandonment

### **Goals**

1. Resolve feelings of guilt, anger and depression
2. Learn the five stages of grief (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance)
3. Work through the grieving process
4. Identify ways to handle stress and loss
5. Grieve the loss within a supportive emotional environment
6. Reengage in relationships with others and resume regular activities

### **How to Help**

1. Build supportive environment with student through eye contact, empathy and listening
2. Explore and let student express feelings of guilt, anger and depression
3. Teach the five stages of grief
4. Explore the steps needed with student to engage with friends
5. Assist parents with involving student in regular activities and fostering friendships
6. Ask the student to write a letter to the lost person describing her/his feelings
7. Teach ways to handle stress and loss
8. Discuss happy memories and how those memories will stay with the student
9. Use art or play to express memories, thoughts and feelings
10. Place the student in a grief group
11. Assist caretakers to help student reengage in relationships with others and resume regular activities.
12. Explore hopeful possibilities of the future