

**Wellness Tips**

Developmental Ages and Possible Reactions to Death

| AGE | THINK | FEEL | Do |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 3-5 years (preschool) | * Death is temporary and reversible
* Finality of death is not evident
* Death mixed up with trips, sleep
* May wonder what deceased is doing
 | * Sad
* Anxious
* Withdrawn
* Confused about changes
* Angry
* Scared
* Cranky (feelings are acted out in

play) | * Cry
* Fight
* Are interested in dead things
* Act as if death never happened
 |
| 6-9 years | * About the finality of death
* About biological process of death
* Death is related to mutilation
* A spirit gets you when you die
* About who will care for them if a parent dies
* Their actions and words caused the death
 | * Sad
* Anxious
* Withdrawn
* Confused about changes
* Angry
* Scared

Cranky (feelings are acted out inplay) | * Behave aggressively
* Behave withdrawn
* Experience nightmares
* Act as if death never happened
* Lack concentration
* Have a decline in grades
 |
| 9-12 years | * About and understand the finality of death
* Death is hard to talk about
* That death may happen again, and feel anxious
* About death with jocularity
* About what will happen if their parent(s) die
* Their actions and words caused the death
 | * Vulnerable
* Anxious
* Scared
* Lonely
* Confused
* Angry
* Sad
* Abandoned
* Guilty
* Fearful
* Worried
* Isolated
 | * Behave aggressively
* Behave withdrawn
* Talk about the Physical aspects of death
* Act like it never happened, not show feelings
* Experience Nightmares
* Lack concentration
* Have a decline in grades
 |
| 12 years and up (teenagers) | * About and understand the finality of death
* If they show their feelings they will be weak
* They need to be in control of their feelings
* About death with jocularity
* Only about life before and after death
* Their actions and words caused the death
 | * Vulnerable
* Anxious
* Scared
* Lonely
* Confused
* Angry
* Sad
* Abandoned
* Guilty
* Fearful
* Worried
* Isolated
 | * Behave Impulsively
* Argue, scream, fight
* Allow themselves to be in dangerous situations
* Grieve for what might have been
* Experience Nightmares
* Act like it never happened
* Lack concentration
* Have a decline in grades
 |
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