

# Khululeka

## Grief Support for Children and Youth

### Information on Grief for Peers

If your friend had a serious loss in his family he will probably behave differently in the following weeks and month.

#### **Understanding about grief**

Children and teens who grieve go through different phases and are often confused about that is happening with them. They often feel isolated and end up isolating themselves even more by being angry or withdrawn.

To begin with your friend will probably feel shock and numbness, not feel anything at or and not believe what has happened.

They might not sleep at night and might more often be ill, have tummy aches, headaches and rashes and not like to eat their food. The body's immune system is usually weaker at the time of a loss that is why they are more susceptible to viruses and have colds and flu.

They might not be able to concentrate at school and find it hard to do their homework.

They often feel empty inside, sad and tearful and then suddenly seem to be quite happy and normal.

They might feel guilty about the death thinking they have somehow caused it.

#### **What your friend needs**

Do not ignore your friend and what is happening to him or her.

Do not change the subject when your friend wants to talk about the person they have lost.

If you knew the person tell them about the things you remember.

You may feel afraid to remind them of their loss and don't want to hurt them. But they are actually thinking about it most of the time.

The daily life of your friend may change a lot. They may not have as much money, they may hate being at home where everyone else is sad, they may not be able to come and play as often as in the past.

Your friend may not want to come to so many things for a while. Don't give up on inviting him or her.

You may not feel as close to them as you used and they might find it hard to express what goes on inside them. Be patient with them, not counting their different reactions as rejection. They need a lot of time and a lot of love just now.

