



## IN TIMES OF GRIEF, WHAT KIDS MAY ASK...

Children do ask questions about death. It is important to know that in responding to a child's questions, keep in mind:

***What does the child need to know?***

***What does the child want to know?***

***What does the child understand?*** (refer to developmental stages)

It's okay to admit that you don't have all the answers—no one does. Before you can explain death to children, you must begin to explain it to yourself.

***Why do people die?***

Dying is a part of life—every living thing in the world dies at the end of life.

***When do people die?***

People die when their bodies no longer work right or stop working. Sometimes when old, sometimes when very sick, or sometimes in accidents.

***When will I die?***

No one can know when you will die. The hope is that you will live a long, healthy, happy life and die when you are very old.

***Can people die at any time?***

It's possible that an accident could cause you or me to die suddenly, but because we are well and healthy, we can expect to live for a long time.

***What do dead people do all the time?***

We don't know what dead people do. We do know that the person who is dead cannot see or hear or talk. (Also okay to explore with the child what **they** think about this in order to determine if any other concerns are prompting the question).

***Can someone die because you wished they were dead?***

No. Wishing someone would die cannot make it happen. Nothing you can do or say or think can cause someone to die.

***Is it okay to cry?***

Of course. Crying is a natural way of letting go of painful feelings. Tears are a part of grieving for boys and girls.

***I feel bad. Why don't I cry?***

You can feel sad without crying. Sometimes the death of someone you love is so hard to believe that you don't cry at first. Some children don't cry because they are afraid tears will upset their family members, or they don't want to let their friends and schoolmates know how sad they are. But it is okay to cry—grownups cry too—and it's okay not to cry if you don't feel like it. Grieving is different for each person.