

Dear Parent or Guardian,

On behalf of the Lightways Hospice and Serious Illness Care staff and volunteers, we would like to extend support as you are facing the end of your loved one's life. As a parent or caregiver, it might be difficult to talk to children or teens about your loved one's illness or death, and/or be unsure of how to best support them in their grief journey. Enclosed in this "Supporting Kids in Grief Toolkit" are resources to assist you and your family in supporting children or teens.

We are also pleased to offer a free copy of "We Can Learn About Grief", an activity book for children 5-8 years old to help them better understand a death and cope with their grief. To request a copy, please ask your Social Worker, or contact our Grief Support Program at **815.460.3295**, or griefsupport@lightways.org. We have also included an article for teens that provides tips about grieving.



Lightways also provides grief support programs that are available to you and your family **at no cost**. These programs include individual and family grief counseling, various support groups and events for children, teens and parents/guardians, and a kid's camp that provides opportunities to meet other grieving families. For more information about our programs, please visit our website <https://lightways.org/griefsupport>

If you have any questions about your child or teen and/or would like to register for any of our grief support programs, please reach out to **815.740.4104** or griefsupport@lightways.org

Sincerely,

Patrice Martin, LCSW
Director of Grief Support Services

Rachael Miller, CCLS
Child Life Specialist

We provide unwavering guidance and support
815.740.4104 | lightways.org

A RESOURCE
FROM
NACG
MEMBERS



Grief Talk: Talking to Children About Death and Dying



Introduction

If you are raising or caring for a child or teen who needs to be informed of a death, you may wonder how to share this news with them. It is perfectly natural to feel nervous or even fearful of talking with a child about this emotional topic. This resource was created to help you prepare for these conversations.

Setting the Stage

Before initiating a conversation with the child, there are some general principles to consider. These include: who will deliver the news, as well as when, where, and how the conversation takes place.

The person who shares the news should ideally be the person to whom the child feels the closest. This is often the caregiver, but not always. If the parent is the person who has died, a grandparent, aunt/uncle, or other relative may be called upon to talk with the child. If it is possible and feels right, another supportive adult who is well known to the child may also be invited to be present. This person can be a resource and support for both the adult sharing the news and the child. If there are multiple children, consider telling them together so they each receive the same story and details.

If you are the person who will be talking with the child, check in with yourself first- do you have support? Do you have the information you need to share this news/ start the conversation? **You are not expected to have all of the answers, but having enough information to begin the conversation is important.** You may spend some time imagining how the conversation might go, or even choose to practice with a friend or family member before talking with the child.

Where and when the news is shared matters. A calm, safe space where you will not be interrupted is ideal. This may be the child's home or another familiar place where they feel safe. You may consider having some comfort items present and available to the child- perhaps a pet, stuffed animal, or special blanket.

The timing of when to approach this conversation is important to consider. Ideally, it is soon enough after the death to assure that they hear the news from you first, and not from a stranger or from social media. This ensures accurate information is shared and allows for time to support the child.

You will want to be as prepared as you can to answer questions and **provide space for the child to share and process their feelings.** Depending on the child's age and developmental level, this may or may not happen right away. Be aware that the child may have additional questions or have a need to lead the conversation.

You may think it is best to protect the child from the truth, particularly with stigmatized (suicide, homicide, or death from substance abuse). However, children often know more than we realize.

Sharing information in small bits at a time can be very helpful. You do not need to share all of the details at once, as that can be upsetting or overwhelming, but what you do share should be true.

When you are with a child, speak with a calm, compassionate tone. Start simply and plan to layer on additional information over time. Provide the opportunity for the child to repeat their understanding of what they heard you say, then restate or clarify if needed. The most important thing you can do for the child is to be present, kind, and compassionate.

Expectations Following the Conversation

Sharing the news of the person's death is only the beginning of the conversation. As indicated above, the child may not be ready or able to ask questions or respond right away to the news of the death. Children respond to death very differently than adults.

Some children, especially younger children, may not respond as we might expect. They may not cry or even seem to understand what you have shared. Children often need to go away and be by themselves or play. A child choosing to play does not indicate that they did not understand or care about the death. In fact, play can be a powerful way for children to process the news.

Provide opportunities for small conversations over time. Invite the child to talk with you anytime and encourage their questions. If there are multiple children of different ages and different needs, they may each respond differently. Provide opportunities for each child to follow up one on one. This will allow them each some time to talk, ask questions, and begin to process the news.

The initial conversation about the death is the start of an ongoing conversation. You should be prepared to revisit the topic over time as the child grows and develops. Plan to check in with the child regularly to support them in the future.

If you are looking for information on how to talk to a child about funerals and end of life rituals, view our [Children and End of Life Memorials and Rituals Toolkit](#).

Young Children (Birth to 5 years old)

Understanding and Response to Death

- Awareness of death is directly influenced and limited by young children's ability to understand their world.
- Death is viewed as the absence of a parent or caregiver.
- Children may be preoccupied with who will take care of them.
- Children may see themselves as responsible in some way, for a death, and they do not yet recognize time and irreversibility of death.
- Child may want to "die" to be with the person who died.
- Repetition is important with younger children, they may repeatedly be asked the same questions.

Sources of Support

As caregivers, you are the primary source of security for your children— your continued reassurance about your presence and support is crucial. Extended family members and others may also provide important support, and you can discuss with them how they can be helpful.



What They May Need from Caregiver(s)

Be a good listener. In all your communication, be sure to listen to what your child is experiencing and feeling and show you understand.

Establish and maintain routines. Offer reassurance about the predictability of events, family security, and routines.

Recognize very young children do not understand death as adults do. When appropriate, gently explain what is happening. You can provide gentle repeating of the facts, knowing time will help the child understand their loss.

Respond truthfully. When asked questions, respond truthfully about death according to your own belief system and what the child can understand at the time. To be truthful does not mean you have to share all of the details at one time.

Model grieving. When a child sees you being sad or express sadness or other emotions, explain what you are thinking and feeling; sadness is only one way people show they miss someone who has died.

Allow and encourage children to play and have fun when they want to.

Reassure children they are safe and cared for. Describe and reassure the child your family will experience new routines and they will be safe and cared for. One way to do this is to establish family life routines and special times to be together.

Talk about the person who died. Give children opportunities to learn and share about their person. Don't be afraid to talk about the person who died.

Encourage art activities. You might ask preschool children to draw a picture showing a memory of their person. Follow up by asking them to tell you about the picture.

Be assured that regressive behavior is natural. This happens when a child no longer does things they could before the death, such as potty training. When a child shows regressive behavior, show patience and understanding.

Include and allow the child to be as involved as they want to be. Ask the child how they want to participate: pick out the color of the flowers, draw or color a picture to be placed in the casket, choose a photo to share, etc.

Children (6 years old to 12 years old)

Understanding and Response to Death

- Awareness of death is influenced and limited by the child's ability to think about their world.
- Many emotions and grief can be explained and understood.
- Explain grief is a combination of reactions one can have after someone has died – thinking about the person, feelings of sadness or anger, physical reactions such as tiredness, or upset stomach. These reactions can come or go.
- Anger can be attributed to a number of causes. It may not be the anger children feel because the person has died, but the anger that results when no one listens or talks to them or includes them in activities. Do not assume what prompts feelings, ask them.
- Children recognize death is irreversible.
- Children will be able to appreciate how the loss of a person in their lives will affect them over time, weeks, or months but may not understand the long-term, life-long impact of a death.

Sources of Support

Although school and outside of their family worlds are increasingly important, caregivers and family are still the school agers' primary source of support. Use outside resources, as you need, to be sure your child is receiving the support they need.

What They May Need from Caregiver(s)

Be a good listener. Encourage their expression of what they are thinking and feeling, their concerns about their alive caregiver's health, financial issues, etc. Provide acceptance and reassurance as needed.

Respond to the child's need for information about the death, often the details, allowing them to build a sense of control. They may have a matter-of-fact reaction rather than an emotional one to the circumstances. Give factual answers to questions as best you can, such as how it happened, when, and where. The "whys" of the death may not even be understood by adults, and you can share this with the child.

Recognize children do not want to be different from other children because of the death. Provide the support they need to continue their ongoing activities with their peers. Find grief support groups available, if needed.

Accept the child's open discussions about the deceased. Including talking or joining with them, magical thinking (did they cause the death), and concerns about their parent or caregiver's health or financial problems.

Understand the child can simultaneously hold seemingly contradictory emotions such as feeling sad about the death yet happy to see family at the memorial service.

Address how the death has and will affect their lives . . . "who will help me with my homework?" Children need the reassurance of continuity in their world.

Help them address separation anxiety by fully preparing them for any future anticipated separations.

Establish ongoing family routines, including positive times you spend together as a family.

Include and allow the child to be as involved as they want to be. Ask the child how they want to participate: pick out flowers, help a sibling, walk the dog, create a photo collage, draw a picture to be placed in the casket, etc.



"Children often know more than we realize."

Teens (13 years old to adulthood)

Understanding and Response to Death

- The teen's awareness and understanding of death are similar to adults. They can incorporate multiple causes and consequences of a death.
- Many complex emotions and grief can be explained and understood.
- Support them in understanding grief is a combination of reactions one can have after someone has died such as thoughts about the person, feelings like sadness or anger, and physical reactions such as tiredness or an upset stomach. They can also experience more subtle emotions or regret, ambivalence, or relief. These reactions can come or go.
- Anger can be attributed to a number of causes. It may not be anger the teen feels because an important person has died but the anger they feel when no one listens or talks to them or has excluded them from activities. Do not assume what prompts feelings, ask.
- Teens do not inherently see themselves as responsible for a death but are apt to analyze information to determine who or what is responsible.



Sources of Support

Although peers and other adults become increasingly important, caregivers remain critical sources of information and support.

What They May Need from Caregiver(s)

Be available to listen and talk. Caregivers can engage in detailed narratives of the death and related events.

Encourage involvement in family activities. Although they are increasingly involved with peers and outside activities, your family's continuity as a safe place where people care about each other is very important to them.

Be aware of the intensity of a teen's grief experience. They may express mood swings. Expect and accept mood swings. Allow hidden feelings unless there is a risk of harm.

Offer specific opportunities for expressing feelings and remembrance through writing, art, music, sports, etc.

Encourage their participation in peer support groups, if desired.

Support their unique identity development and independence. Acknowledging their preference of spending more time with friends balanced with continued involvement in family activities and family bereavement remembrances. Avoid escalation of conflict as they express their independent identity.

Consistently set appropriate limits. Adolescents need these limits, although they may protest them.

Avoid having them take on too much family responsibility if it is at the expense of their independent development.

Encourage stress reduction. Avoid getting them involved in solving stressful situations beyond their ability to control, such as conflicts between adult family members.

Include and allow the teen to be as involved as they want to be. Ask the teen how they want to participate: pick out flowers, help a sibling, read a poem, create a photo collage, write a letter to be placed in the casket, etc.



10 Key Points to remember when talking to children and teens about death and dying

Grief is individual. Children and teens usually do not tell you they are grieving by what they say and do. No two people grieve the exact same way, but there are reactions to help you know a child or teen is grieving.

Use simple, clear age-appropriate language. Caregivers should explain the death in a compassionate manner using age-appropriate short, simple explanations in language children and teens can understand. It is important to use the right words to talk about the death, such as “Mom died from cancer”. Avoid euphemisms like passed away or went to sleep, as they can confuse children and teens. This is key so children and teens do not associate the death with anything other than the reality of how it occurred.

Children and teens want to be told the truth about the death. Our instinct is to protect the children and teens from potentially difficult situations. Although it might be more comfortable for us to avoid these conversations, they are very important for the child or teen’s understanding. It can be difficult to explain a stigmatized death to a child or teen, for example, death by suicide or a drug-related death.

Be honest. Honesty is the foundation of a trusting relationship between a caregiver and child or teens. Lying to a child or teen about the circumstances of death could lead to bitterness and mistrust when they learn the truth. Let their questions guide what you share. Speak openly and honestly about the death. It is ok not to know all the answers.

Take time to prepare for difficult conversations. Take some deep breaths and give yourself time to collect your thoughts. Think of this initial conversation as laying the groundwork, allowing the child or teen to ask questions and explore what they are thinking. It is not the time to share all available information. Focus on ensuring they understand what was said and explain the death was no one’s fault.

Accept this is an ongoing conversation. The initial conversation about the death is the start of an ongoing conversation. You should be prepared to revisit the topic over time as the child grows and develops. Plan to check in with the child regularly to support them in the future.

Listen. When a child or teen is grieving, people can be quick to offer advice, give opinions and make judgments. Remember to listen without judging, interpreting, or evaluating.

Model healthy grieving. Children and teens look to their caregivers as a role model for how people grieve. Be open with your feelings and how you are being supported.

Allow and validate emotional expression. It is important for children and teens who are grieving to have the space to be able to express their grief and have it validated. Validation of grief reactions occurs when adults or peers in a child's life acknowledge what the child or teen is feeling and allow the child the space needed to express their grief in a way that feels most natural to them, as long as they are not hurting themselves or others.

Grief is long-lasting. Grief is not an experience children or teens "get over" or "move on" from after a few weeks or months. Grief does not have a timeline and it changes over the course of someone's life. It is OK for children and teens to continue to grieve the loss as they grow and develop.

Communication with special needs children is as important as speaking with any child. If you are looking for information on how to support a child with special needs, view our [Supporting Children of All Abilities Who are Grieving Toolkit](#).



When to Seek Additional Support

After a death, it is essential to monitor changes in frequency, intensity, and duration of family members' behaviors. Noticeable changes may require additional support from an experienced, trained professional. Below are some examples of changes to look for:

- Inability to go to work or school
- Difficulties in relationships
- Sleep problems or nightmares
- Disproportionate anger or irritability
- Increased health issues
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Social withdrawal
- Self-harm, suicidal thoughts, or suicidal ideation

Sometimes family members may want to connect with others for additional support. Connecting family members with peer support groups, camps, conferences, or another person with a similar loss can help provide an added layer of support. These outside connections provide the griever with an opportunity to learn new perspectives on grief, coping, and healing.

Connecting with others allows people who are grieving the opportunity to share their stories, understand that they are not alone, and validate and normalize their experience. It is important to embrace a family members' readiness, as well as the type of support needed. Needs may vary among family members throughout their grief journey.

You can find additional support in your area by visiting www.nacg.org/find-support.



“The most important thing you can do for the child is to be present, kind, and compassionate.”

***Inclusive Gender Statement:** In the context of this document, the use of the term “child(ren)” encompasses both boys and girls, as well as any other gender identity or gender expression that falls within the spectrum of childhood. This language choice is intended to promote inclusion and respect for the diversity of gender identities and non-binary genders.

Suggested Resource List

The inclusion of any organization or resource in this Resource List does not imply or constitute an endorsement or recommendation, nor does exclusion imply disapproval.

National Alliance for Children's Grief

There are a variety of resources available for free and for purchase, but the following are especially beneficial resources for funeral homes and families.

- [NACG Resource Library \(nacg.org/resources\)](https://nacg.org/resources)
- ["Grief Talks: Talking to Children about Death & Dying"](#)
- ["Grief Talks: Talking to Children about End of Life Rituals"](#)
- ["When Someone Dies: A Family Activity Book"](#)

Funeral Service Foundation (funeralservicefoundation.org)

- [Youth and Funerals Booklet](#)
- [When a Child Dies Booklet](#)

Books

- [The Centering Corporation \(centering.org\)](https://centering.org) has a lengthy list of books that can be supportive for families and grief professionals alike. Specifically for funeral homes, the following list is a good place to start. Please keep in mind that some of these books will mention specific after death beliefs that may not be applicable to all families or be inclusive of all cultures.
- In Loving Memory by Lacie Brueckner & Katherine Pendergast - two versions; for burial and cremation
- *Is Daddy Coming Back in a Minute?* and *What Happened to Daddy's Body* By Elke and Alex Barber (3+)
- *Lifetimes* by Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen (3+)
- *The Next Place* by Warren Hanson (5+)
- *What Does That Mean? A Dictionary of Death, Dying and Grief terms for Grieving Children and Those Who Love Them* by Harold Ivan Smith and Joy Johnson (8+)

Online Resources

- [Kids and Funerals Article](#)
- [After a Death: An Activity Book for Children](#)
- [How to offer First Viewing Support for Kids, *handout*](#). A "how-to" for being present with a child who is viewing their deceased loved one for the first time.

For Kids with Autism

- [NACG Supporting Children of All Abilities who are grieving Toolkit](#)
- [Eluna article about helping children with Autism with social stories](#)
- Book: *I have a Question about Death* by Arlen Gaines and Meredith Polsky



Grief Talk is an initiative of the NACG aimed at encouraging and supporting honest conversations around the topics of death and grief. This initiative has produced the following resources:

Talking to Children About Death and Dying
[*Telling a Child Someone has Died*](#)
[*Talking about End of Life Memorials and Rituals*](#)
[*Grief Talk: Schools Series*](#)

For additional resources, visit childrengrieve.org.

Thank you to the following NACG member organizations and individuals who contributed the content for this resource: (Listed alphabetically by last name.)

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NOW WHAT?

TIPS FOR TEENS WHO ARE GRIEVING



We're guessing you're here because someone in your life has died. Whether it was a parent, sibling, grandparent, close friend, boyfriend/girlfriend, or other family member, we're glad you found your way to this tip sheet.

The information here comes directly from the grieving teens we've worked with in our peer support groups, because they get it more than anyone.

Grief can get messy. When someone dies, most of us don't know what to do, how to talk about it, or even how we're supposed to feel. It's confusing and strange. It can be awkward to try to connect with other people about grief. Have you ever told someone that your person died and they give you a weird look or ask if you're joking? Not great, right?

THE LOW DOWN ON GRIEF

One thing we've learned from other teens who have had someone die is grief usually does what it wants — it doesn't follow any rules or keep to a schedule. There's no recipe and there isn't a right or wrong way to grieve. What matters most is figuring out what really helps you deal with all that comes with grief and what doesn't help at all. It's totally up to you.



ALL ABOUT CHANGES

When someone dies, your whole world can radically change. Some teens describe it as a hurricane or a tornado, taking out everything in its path. You're left to pick up the pieces and figure out what life will be like without that person. Who will you be? How will your family react? What will you remember and what will you miss? There are no expectations for how you might think and feel about the person or the loss (although people might be throwing lots of "shoulds" at you). Grief can be intense and loud or quiet and barely there. Some people aren't sure what they feel. It's all okay.

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FEELINGS AND OTHER STRANGE THINGS

While no one can ever know exactly how you feel, there are some things grieving teens seem to have in common. Sometimes your sleep gets messed up — can't fall asleep, waking up early and having weird dreams. Food might not taste the same or your stomach could feel tied up in knots. Maybe your memory isn't working as well as it used to — "How did I forget my friend's birthday? Where is my phone?!" Maybe you find yourself frustrated with people talking about their day to day dramas.

A lot of teens notice they get really worried if someone is a few minutes late or doesn't answer a text right away. You might wonder if you're grieving the right way, or if you're grieving at all because you feel numb. You could come up against feelings of guilt, fear, anger, and sometimes shame. And then there is school...a lot of grieving teens say it's rough because it's harder to concentrate or finish homework.




FRIENDS
AKA: ANYONE OUT
THERE GET IT??

Lots of teens find it's hard to relate with friends and family in the same way when they're grieving. Friends, no matter how much they care, don't always know what to do and their attempts to make you feel better might not work very well. Honestly, when you're grieving sometimes nothing feels good or right — even things you loved before the death. It can be easy to take that frustration out on the people you're closest with — maybe you're a little quicker to get irritated these days? If so, you're not alone.

SPEAKING OF GUILT—AND REGRET

We'd venture a guess that 99.9% of people grieving feel guilt or regret about something they did and said or didn't do or say. We aren't expected to be perfect in our relationships because we are human and we all say and do things that looking back we wish we hadn't. When someone dies, this very natural experience can feel extra intense because we can't apologize to the person — in person. Many teens start by acknowledging these feelings, without rushing to push them aside. Sometimes just sitting with guilt and regret can lessen their intensity.

You can also try one of the suggestions in the 10 Things section of this tip sheet. If you're feeling guilty or worried that you had something to do with the person's death, it can be helpful to talk with a trusted adult who knows the situation and can answer questions. This might be a medical professional, family friend, caregiver, teacher, coach, pastor, or someone else who will be able to say more than "don't feel that way" and "you know that's not right." The regret you feel might inspire you to act differently in the future towards people you care about.



Joaquin's mom died in a car crash after she dropped him off at school. He was late that morning and didn't have time to say, "thanks mom, I love you," so now he tries to always tell close friends and family that he loves them when he says goodbye.



FAMILY: GOING THROUGH IT TOGETHER & SEPARATELY

Grief can change a lot of things in your world, including how you and your family connect. You might be really comfortable being open about your grief with family members. You might also find talking and showing emotions with them to be more intense than with friends or even strangers. How people grieve might look different depending on their age, where they grew up, cultural expectations (maybe your parents and Tias expect you to act a certain way, but it's not how you feel), religion/spirituality, gender norms (family members expecting you to cry or not cry depending on your gender), and what your family expects or needs from you in terms of helping with chores and caring for other people. You might see families in movies or on TV shows grieving very differently than yours, and start to wonder "Are we doing it wrong?"

Remembering that various cultures, generations, families, and even neighborhoods have different ideas about the "right" way to grieve, might help with feeling okay with your own grief experience. Sometimes expectations and individual ways of grieving can create tension or misunderstandings within families and communities. It can be helpful to talk with a friend or trusted adult to get clear on what you need and even ask for help with talking to your family about those needs.



CIRCLE THE THINGS PEOPLE SAY AND DO THAT GET UNDER YOUR SKIN:

Say "I'm sorry for your loss"

Come up and hug me when we aren't even friends

Say things like "This class is killing me" "I wish my mom would die"

Say "I know how you feel...my hamster/cat/great great great grandfather died."

Ask "Aren't you over it yet?"

Write in your own _____ (it's okay if your list is longer than ours)



WHAT IF I FORGET?

As you make your way into grief, you might find yourself worrying you'll forget certain things about the person who died. Consider asking family and friends to share their memories and stories about the person. *Warning: they might cry, it's okay!* Who could you ask to find out more? Who would know what your dad was like as a teenager or where your grandmother most wanted to go on a trip? We also know that not everyone was super close to their person who died. No matter what your relationship was like, or if you didn't really have one, you can still get hit with grief.

10 THINGS TO TRY WHEN THE GRIEF TIDE ROLLS IN

1. Remember to breathe. When we get tense we tend to hold our breath or have short, shallow breaths. First, notice that you are breathing and then try slowing it down, breathing more into your belly, and exhaling a little longer than you inhale.

2. Move your body. This doesn't have to be a sport (but it can be) — take a walk, do a push up, dance, or just jump up and down.

3. Call or text a friend. Pick ones who know how to show up and listen — or will at least send you a cute animal video.

4. Write it out. Forget spelling and grammar, there are no grades in grief.

5. Get messy — draw, paint, collage. Sometimes grief doesn't have words and art can be a great way to get out the feelings that don't always make sense. It's not art class, so don't worry about making it look a certain way.

6. Make room for whatever feelings are coming up. If you try to push them away, they will probably just push back harder. Feelings change and they won't last forever. Grief has no timeline, but it really does change over time.

7. Be kind — to yourself. You know that voice that sometimes gives you a really hard time? It might sound strange, but you can talk to that criticizing voice and ask it to tone it down. "Hey, I hear you, you're worried I'm doing this wrong, but really, I'm not. I'm doing the best I can right now, but thanks for your input."

8. Be a good friend — to yourself. Experiment with telling yourself you can do this, even if you don't know what you're doing! You might be feeling emotions you've never had before or doing things for the first time and all of it is happening without the

person who died. Take a moment to acknowledge how new and different this is and tell yourself, "Even if I'm overwhelmed right now, I will figure this out." And then...

9. Ask for help. We know, this one can be really hard and scary to do. Keep it simple and remember that people usually want to help, they are just waiting to be asked.

10. Take time to celebrate whatever is going well. When you're grieving it can be hard to make space for feeling good. You might feel guilty if you find yourself laughing or having a good time. Taking a break from grief doesn't mean you love or miss the person any less.

SOS (GETTING MORE HELP)

One last (but important) thing. Grief can be really hard — and it can make other things that were already hard seem impossible. Sometimes, grieving teens need more help. If you are struggling with school, eating, or sleeping, or if you're thinking about hurting yourself or others, talking to a real human person can be one of the best ways to get help. You can start with a friend, a family member, a trusted teacher or counselor, or a crisis line such as Youthline, a peer-to-peer crisis line for teens. You can call them at 877-968-8491, text them by sending teen2teen to 839863 between 4pm and 10pm, or chat online at OregonYouthLine.org. One more option: the Crisis Text Line can be reached by texting HELLO to 741741. Whether you connect with a crisis line or a person in your life, please do reach out to someone when you're struggling — you matter, and you deserve help and support!