

NOTES FOR GRIEVING CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

You need to know that it is OK to:

- cry and feel low and depressed — you've lost a great deal
- feel angry, embarrassed and not want to talk about your feelings
- copy some of the activities and interests your brother or sister had before they died, but you need to retain your own life too
- 'live in the past' for a while — it can help you to keep alive the memory of your brother or sister, but try not to let life pass you by
- have fun and enjoy life, to laugh again and forget for a while, forgive yourself for the fights and arguments and nasty things you might have said to your brother or sister who died
- go on living.

But it is NOT OK to:

- use drugs or excessive alcohol to dull your senses — this can only act as an escape and hide the pain, not helping to heal it and it will then take longer to accept the hurt
- act out your frustration with reckless driving or skipping school
- do things with your anger that can hurt other people because you are hurting yourself
- experiment casually with sex, just to get close to someone
- hide your feelings and not talk about what is bothering you to protect your parents or siblings
- act as the scapegoat or bad guy to appear tough.

If you find yourself experiencing some of the following then it is important that you seek extra help:

- prolonged deterioration in relationships with family and friends
- risk taking behaviour such as drug and alcohol abuse, fighting and sexual experimentation
- lack of interest in school and poor academic performance
- signs of chronic depression, sleeping difficulties and low self esteem
- dropping the activities that once meant so much to you.