



# SEEDS OF HOPE

## FOR CAREGIVERS: Six Ways to Find Resiliency After a Loss



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### **Give Yourself Permission to Be Authentic in Your Grief**

As much as you wish you didn't have to deal with all the feelings after losing someone close, sometimes you have no choice. Grief will keep knocking at the door, so you might as well open that door and invite grief in. Make space for those feelings –and 'feel all the feels.' Caregivers often worry about showing emotion in front of their children. As long as caregivers can maintain control of their emotions (so that the child is not taking care of the adult), it is healthy for kids to witness caregivers cry. It gives kids permission to do the same. When adults are authentic in their grief and model healthy grief expressions, it allows room for others to do the same.

### **Maintain Boundaries for Your Child**

It's important to reestablish a sense of safety after a death of someone close. At times, you may feel inclined to allow your child to push the limits or break the rules because of the recent loss. Process what is happening. Say, "I've noticed (insert behavior here)" and talk about it. There is always room for flexibility in this process, but if possible, try to be consistent in your expectations. Realistic boundaries will not exacerbate your child's grief, but instead will help your child to feel more secure and cared for.

### **Recognize Small Moments as "Wins"**

Resiliency often happens over an extended period of time but can also be built moment to moment. Typical daily activities may feel insurmountable but consider small tasks as realistic and note-worthy objectives. For example, set a goal to "shower and get dressed tomorrow" and then most importantly, allow yourself to feel satisfied and proud if you achieve this task.

### **ABOUT THIS GUIDE**

This guide to children's grief was compiled by Jeff's Place, an award-winning community for grieving children, teens, families, and individuals based in Framingham.

The Parmenter Foundation provides support for compassionate end-of-life care and bereavement programs in MetroWest Boston.

To learn more about Jeff's Place:



[jeffsplace.org](http://jeffsplace.org)

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## **Spend Time with other People who “Get It”**

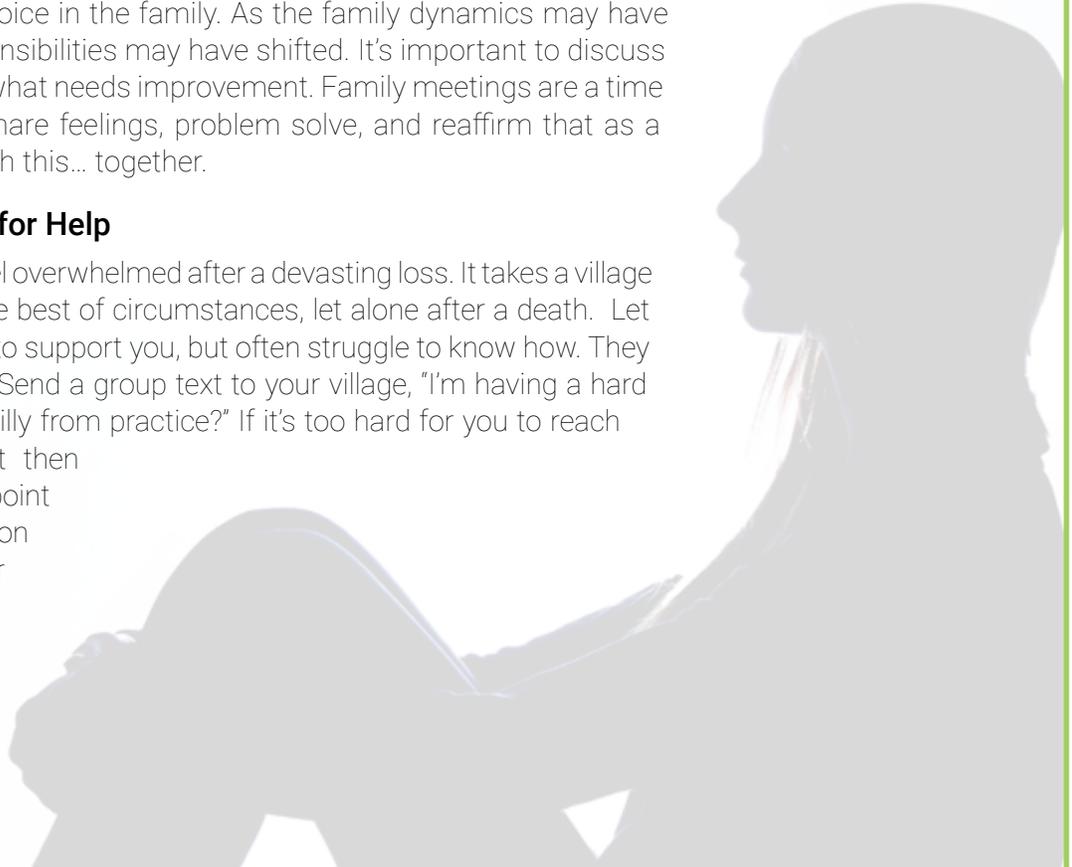
Grief can make you feel very isolated. Reaching out and connecting to others in a similar situation will help build your resiliency. Sharing your experience and listening to others in similar experiences will help you feel less alone in your grief journey. Grief is messy and learning to “sit in the mud” is part of the process. But you don’t have to do it alone. There are many others in the same storm, just different boats. Reach out.

## **Bring Back the Family Meeting**

Recognize that families don’t grieve in sync. Family communication is key. Scheduling periodic times to gather and connect about how things are going gives everyone a voice in the family. As the family dynamics may have changed, roles and responsibilities may have shifted. It’s important to discuss what’s working well and what needs improvement. Family meetings are a time to focus on strengths, share feelings, problem solve, and reaffirm that as a family you will get through this... together.

## **Don’t Be Afraid to Ask for Help**

It’s of course normal to feel overwhelmed after a devastating loss. It takes a village to raise a family under the best of circumstances, let alone after a death. Let others help. People want to support you, but often struggle to know how. They appreciate the guidance. Send a group text to your village, “I’m having a hard day, can someone grab Billy from practice?” If it’s too hard for you to reach out, that’s okay too, but then consider setting up a point person who can ask on your behalf. Remember that asking for help is a sign of strength, not a weakness. It really does take a village.



**MORE SEEDS OF HOPE:**

**PARMENTERFOUNDATION.ORG**

PROVIDING SUPPORT FOR COMPASSIONATE END-OF-LIFE CARE AND BEREAVEMENT PROGRAMS IN METROWEST.

**THE PARMENTER FOUNDATION**

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