



The Bill of Rights for Grieving Teens

A grieving teen has the right . . .

- 1. to have my own unique feelings about the death.** No one will feel exactly like I do. My feelings don't need to make sense to anyone else.
- 2. to know that grief is like the weather.** It is not something I can control. I may have grief bursts that come out of nowhere.
- 3. to know the truth about the death, the deceased, and the circumstances of the death.**
- 4. to have my questions answered honestly.**
- 5. to be silent and not tell anyone what I am feeling or thinking.**
- 6. to come to my own understanding about the death.**
- 7. to see the person who died and the place of the death.**
- 8. to grieve any way I want as long as I don't hurt myself or others.**
- 9. to be angry at death, at the person who died, at God, at self, and at others.**
- 10. to have my own beliefs about life and death.**
- 11. to be involved in the planning of rituals (funeral, memorials, viewings) and to participate in them if I choose to.**
- 12. to not have to take on adult responsibilities.**
- 13. to have irrational guilt about how I could have prevented the death.** To have regrets about things I wish I had said or done.
- 14. to know that grief affects me emotionally, cognitively, and physically.** I may be irritable and easily upset. Things that used to be easy for me to accomplish may be more difficult now. I may be forgetful, have trouble concentrating or paying attention. My body may ache, feel heavy or feel like it is going to burst.
- 15. to mourn or express my grief in my own timing.** My grief is not a problem to be solved or something to get over. I don't know how long it will take for me to feel better. Please let me grieve at my own pace.
- 16. to not feel ashamed about my feelings and needs.** My feelings of grief and my need for support are normal.
- 17. to think about my memories of the person who died. I have the right to talk about the person who died.** Sometimes those memories will be happy and sometimes they may be sad. Either way, these memories help me stay connected to the person who died. The person died, not the relationship.
- 18. to have mixed feelings about the person who died.** There may be qualities of the person who died that I miss terribly. There may also be things about them that I don't miss. I have the right to feel both ways about the person who died. I may be upset with the person who died for things they did to hurt me or I may be angry at them for dying.

** adapted from the Grief Bill of Rights created by the teen group at the Dougy Center in Portland, Oregon