

HIGH RISK STUDENTS

In a grieving student, the following changes in behavior and/or occurrence of symptoms constitute a high-risk student for whom a referral for professional evaluation may be appropriate:

- **Drop in grades**

A student's grades may go down for a week or two but should return to previous levels. If there is no improvement after some time, consider seeking help. Try to understand when a student is avoiding homework because of associated depression versus using the loss as an excuse not to do homework.

- **Angry outbursts**

- **Hyperactivity**

- **Depression**

- **Discussions about wanting to die**

Watch for what the student is saying and expressing through writing or drawing. In young children, watch their play.

- **Changes in physical symptoms**

Watch for symptoms like lack of appetite, nightmares, restlessness, inability to concentrate, clinging to parents, or physical complaints.

- **Feelings of guilt**

Watch for students who express a responsibility for the death of a loved one – something he/she said or did.

- **Lack of communication**

Watch for students who do not want to talk about the loss or exhibit a prolonged inability to acknowledge the loss.

- **Identity change**

Watch for the students who seem to be assuming the identity of the person who has died.

- **Isolation or withdrawal**

Watch for the student who becomes isolated, drops out of clubs or sports, or cancels events with friends.

- **Use of drugs or alcohol**

American Hospice Foundation
2120 L Street, NW
Suite 200
Washington, DC 20037
202-223-0204 Fax 202-223-0208
www.americanhospice.org