

Acknowledge your emotions. When you learn that a schoolmate has died, you may feel emotional and sad. That is okay. It is normal to feel sad and feel like crying. Alternately, you might feel angry, be in denial, be shocked, or feel nothing or be numb.[1] All of these emotions are perfectly okay.[2]

- Tears are common when something tragic happens, like the death of a schoolmate. Let it out and cry. You'll probably feel better afterwards.[3]
- You may experience some or all of these emotions as you work through the grieving process.

Talk to someone you trust. Consider talking to someone about what you are feeling. You can talk to your parents, a teacher, school counselor, or your friends.[4]

- Consider seeing a professional counselor or grief counselor. They can help you work through confusing and distressing emotions.
- Talking about the event and your feelings helps you heal and work through your grief.
- For example, say, "I am feeling very sad because John died" or "I'm scared about my own death because John died." You can also say, "I am confused about how I feel because my classmate died."

Deal with your fears. Having someone you know who is so close to your age die can be a frightening and confusing experience. Maybe you have not thought that young people could die, so you feel scared. This is okay. Maybe you want to question the concept of death or life. You may ask adults about the nature of death, what happens after death, or what happens to a physical body after death.[5]

- It's natural to feel scared and think about your own eventual death when someone dies. Talk about these feelings with your parents or teachers.
- If you feel obsessed about your own death or become scared you are going to die, talk to an adult. If you feel uncomfortable talking to your parents, then talk to a teacher or school counselor.

Find some comfort. When you are dealing with traumatic events, try to find some comfort in things that make you happy and feel safe. You might spend time with those closest to you. Spending time with friends and family can help provide comfort when you are scared, sad, or grieving.[6] You might feel safer if you are around people instead of alone.[7]

- If you find comfort in being alone, you can listen to your favorite music, read your favorite book, or watch your favorite movie.
- You may want to spend time with a pet, or curl up with your pet as you listen to music or watch your favorite show.

Talk about your loss. An important way to move on and heal is to talk about what happened. Talk about the loss of your classmate. It doesn't matter if you were close to the person or not. The death of someone you know is difficult. Talking about the person, your fears, or your feelings can help you start to process and heal.[8]

- When you talk about it, you let more of it out. If the feelings stay inside, you may feel upset or like it's too much. Talking about it lets you get a little bit out each time, which eventually allows you to move on and heal.
- For example, say something like, "I am sad about Sally dying" or "I wish I had known Sally better before she died. That makes me sad."

Reflect on your memories. When a schoolmate dies, think about any good memories you have of the person. Think about interactions you had with your schoolmate. If you didn't know the person very well, think about what you did know about them, such as remembering them in class, at lunch, or out on the playground.[9]

- Get together with other classmates to talk about the deceased schoolmate. You can talk about memories with each other.
- You can say, "I remember when I played with Jasmine on the playground. We had fun" or "I remember how Jasmine always was the first to answer a question in class."

Return to your usual routine. It's important to get back to your normal day to day life. This includes going to school, participating in activities, and going out with friends. Sitting around and constantly thinking about what happened is not healthy. You need to remember the person who died, but continue on with your life.

- This may be difficult at first. If you need to, start out slowly. Instead of trying to return to everything at once, return to one thing at a time as you move on and get back into your normal routine.

1. **Seek closure.** If one of your classmates dies, you may want to say goodbye to them.

Consider going to the wake or viewing, or go to the funeral. Some families may have a reception or dinner in honor of the student. Visit the gravesite after the classmate is buried and read them a letter you wrote.

- This can provide closure for you, help you grieve, and allow you to move on.
- If you do not want to attend the funeral, then you might try setting up a memorial for your friend in your home. Find some pictures and keepsakes that remind you

of your friend and place them on a table. Then, reflect on the good times you had with the person. You might even try talking to a picture of your friend and saying goodbye to him or her.

Know when to ask for help. You may find that no matter what you do you cannot get over what happened. If this happens to you, talk to your parents or school counselor about getting help.^[10] Consider going to see a professional grief counselor or therapist to help you talk about and process what happened.^[11]

- You might feel anxious or scared of dying. You may not want to get out of bed or go to school, or you might be unable to go to sleep. If you feel depressed, anxious, or otherwise unable to move on, talk to someone.
- For example, tell someone, "I need some help dealing with this grief" or "I'm not sure how to get over Bob dying. Can you help me?"