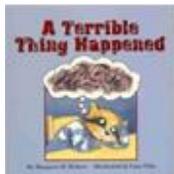


Recommended Books on Death, Grief and Loss
Center for Good Mourning
www.goodmourningcenter.org

There are many excellent books dealing with death, grief and loss available for both children and adults. Presented below is a selective list of recommended books covering a wide variety of grief-related topics and genres. Please review any book with thoughtful consideration before using with children.

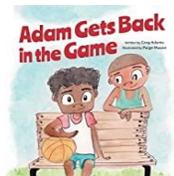
PICTURE BOOKS

A Terrible Thing Happened by Margaret M. Holmes, illustrated by Cary Pillo. Magination Press, 2000.



“Sherman Smith saw the most terrible thing. He was very upset. It really scared Sherman to see such a terrible thing.” The “terrible thing” is never defined—it could be an accident, a death or an act of violence. The story ends as “Sherman is feeling much better now. He just thought you would want to know.”

Adam Gets Back in the Game by Greg Adams. Et Alia Press, 2019.



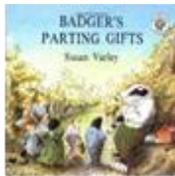
For ten-year-old Adam, happiness is being involved in a little of everything, including his favorite thing of all, playing basketball with his best friend Isaiah. But when he falls on a broken bottle, everything must stop for his “big hurt.” Later, all that Adam learned in healing from his injured hand will be put to the test when Isaiah dies suddenly in an accident. *Author proceeds from this book go to the ACH Center for Good Mourning.*

Annie and the Old One by Miska Miles, illustrated by Peter Parnall. Little Brown and Co., 1971.



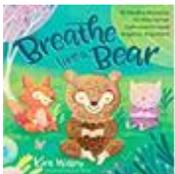
Annie is a Navajo girl who lives with her mother, father and maternal grandmother—the “Old One.” One day Annie’s grandmother gathers the family and announces, “My children, when the new rug is taken from the loom, I will go to Mother Earth.” Annie resists this reality, and with gentleness and wisdom, her grandmother helps Annie to understand that although her grandmother will die, her grandmother would always be.

Badger’s Parting Gifts by Susan Varley. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1984.



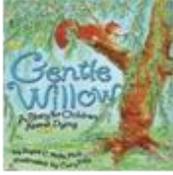
Following Badger’s peaceful death, his friends recall their special memories of how he taught each of them something special- Badger’s parting gifts. A classic for good reasons—wise story and great illustrations.

Breathe Like a Bear: 30 Mindful Moments for Kids to Feel Calm and Focused Anytime, Anywhere by Kira Willey. Rodale Kids, 2017.



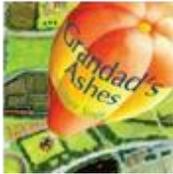
There are many adult resources to teach mindful practices which can be helpful coping tools for stress and for when one is grieving. This book helps teach mindful practices to children in fun and engaging ways, and these “mindful moments” can be helpful coping tools for stress and grief experienced by children.

Gentle Willow: A Story for Children about Dying by Joyce Mills. Magination Press, 1993.



This tender story brings back the characters from *Little Tree* (1992) to face the illness and eventual death of Gentle Willow. Amanda the squirrel and the tree wizards address feelings of disbelief, anger and sadness along with love, compassion and caregiving. The story provides children, and those reading the story with them, a “transformational” way of viewing death and dying.

Grandad's Ashes by Walter Smith. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2007.



After Grandad died, Grandma said, "He had always wanted to be cremated and his last wish was to have his ashes scattered in his favourite place." The problem for the grandchildren was deciding what his "favourite place" was and then successfully scattering Grandad's ashes. Set in the United Kingdom, there are a few terms that may not be familiar to American children such as "lorries" and "mince pies", and these can be entries into good conversations. A warm and comforting book.

Grandpa's Song by Tony Johnston, pictures by Brad Sneed, Dial Books for Young Readers, 1991.



One-day Grandpa gathered the grandchildren and taught them the “best song in the world” —a song about how beautifully Grandpa sings. As time goes one, however, Grandpa starts to get “fuzzy” and can’t remember things as he did before. When his birthday comes he doesn’t want a party as he’s afraid he’ll seem fuzzy and old. Grandma and the grandchildren surprise and sing to him “the best song in the world” which leads to smiles, laughter and more singing.

If Nathan Were Here by Mary Bahr, illustrated by Karen A. Jerome. Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2000.



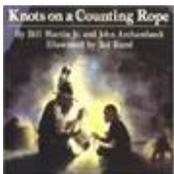
An especially beautiful book about a boy whose best friend, Nathan, has died. His classroom teacher has the boy's class contribute items to a Memory Box for Nathan. A good story for use in a classroom.

Is Daddy Coming Back in a Minute? Explaining sudden death to pre-school children in words they can understand by Elke & Alex Barber, illustrated by Anna Jarvis, Crowdfunded in 2012, www.isdaddycomingback.com.



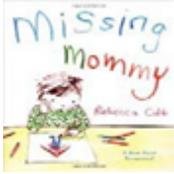
Alex was three years old when he and his father went away for a "boys only" weekend and his father died unexpectedly. In this book based on the true story of the Barber family, Alex tells the story and asks lots of three-year-old questions, and his mother does a beautiful job of answering honestly and clearly in ways that give Alex the opportunity to understand the basic facts of what happened. A very helpful addition to books available for assisting young children in understanding death.

Knots on a Counting Rope by John Archambault and Bill Martin, Jr., illustrated by Ted Rand. Henry Holt and Co., 1987.



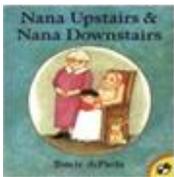
A Native American grandson asks his grandfather to once again tell him the story of his birth which they retell together. Grandfather and grandson recall special times that they have had together and how the grandson has learned to see although physically he is blind. After the telling, the grandfather ties another knot on the counting rope and reminds the grandson that when the rope is full, the grandson will not need the grandfather to help tell the story. The grandfather promises that while he will not always be with the grandson, his love will always surround him.

Missing Mommy: A Book About Bereavement by Rebecca Cobb, Henry Holt and Company, 2013, (first published in the United Kingdom, MacMillan Children's Books, 2011, www.mackids.com).



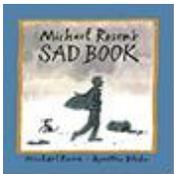
“Some time ago we said good-bye to Mommy. I am not sure where she has gone.” The storyteller is a young boy who is confused by his mother's absence. Eventually, his father helps him understand that his mother has died. His father helps him understand the basics: his mother can't come back because she has died and her body doesn't work anymore, it was nothing he did, his father wishes she were here, too, but they are still a family and will remember her always.

Nana Upstairs & Nana Downstairs by Tomie dePaola, Puffin Books, 1973.



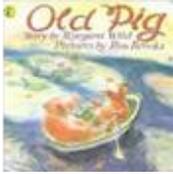
This book is a true story of the author's own experiences with a grandmother and great-grandmother. Four-year-old Tommy loves to visit the house where both his grandmother and great-grandmother live. His great-grandmother is 94 years old and stays mostly in her upstairs bedroom so Tommy refers to her as Nana Upstairs. His grandmother by contrast then becomes Nana Downstairs. Tommy's affectionate and comfortable relationship with both Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs is simply and tenderly expressed and illustrated as is his response when he learns that Nana Upstairs has died.

Michael Rosen's Sad Book by Michael Rosen. Candlewick Press, 2004.



Michael Rosen knows about feeling sad, and he tells the story of feeling sad in a very gentle, real way. He also shares about what he does to feel better, but he respects sad and the reader enough to not pretend that it's easy. Certainly not hopeless, but not easy. He explains things very well.

Old Pig by Margaret Wild, pictures by Ron Brooks, Allen & Unwin, Australia, www.allenandunwin.com, 1995.



Old Pig experiences the weariness that can come when life is coming to an end and Granddaughter is worried. With quiet confidence, Old Pig prepares. Part of her preparation is a long slow walk around town where she feasts on the sights, sounds, smells and tastes that have been part of her good life. In the evening after her tiring and satisfying walk, Old Pig is exhausted and goes straight to bed. Granddaughter Pig stays with her as Old Pig had done for Granddaughter Pig when she was little and scared, and for the very last time, they hold each other tight until morning

Something Happened: A book for children and parents who have experienced a pregnancy loss by Cathy Blanford, illustrated by Phyllis Childers, Signature Book Printing, 2008, www.somethinghappenedbook.com.



A young boy is excited (mostly) by the coming of a new baby in the family, but then something happens, and the baby dies. In the days after, the boy explains that his parents let him know it wasn't anyone's fault that it happened and that no matter how hard they wish, their baby can't come back because it died. The family plants a tree and flowers to help remember the baby, and the boy is reassured that they are still a family and their loves goes on and on. Pregnancy loss can be especially challenging for parents to explain. For these special losses, this book is a real help.

Thank You, Grandpa by Lynn Plourde, illustrated by Jason Cockcroft, Dutton Children's Books, 2003.



Grandfather and granddaughter take nature walks through the years and the seasons and the granddaughter learns about saying "thank you" for the small wonders that they experience together. One day she walks alone and says "thank you" to her grandfather for all that he gave her. She makes a promise to never forget him.

The Bug Cemetery by Frances Hill, illustrated by Vera Rosenberry. Henry Holt and Co., 2002.



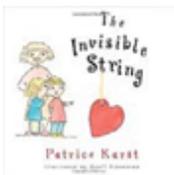
When a boy finds a dead ladybug, he and his sister bury it and hold a pretend funeral. Funerals and burials for bugs become fun and popular in the neighborhood, but when the boy's cat is killed, the funeral is real and sad. A unique story that is funny, sad, and hopeful.

Ida Always by Caron Levis. Atheneum Books for Young Readers, 2016.



Ida and Gus are two polar bears in a zoo. They are great friends, but one day Ida becomes sick. Usually, there are ways to make a sick bear better not this time. Gus and Ida spend Ida's remaining days with times of fun, rest, and sharing. After Ida's death, Gus experiences Ida memory and spirit in a way that will be with him always.

The Invisible String by Patrice Karst, illustrated by Geoff Stevenson, DeVorss Publications, 2000, www.devorss.com.



Twins Liza and Jeremy rush from their beds to their mother after being awakened by a thunderstorm. Mom takes advantage of this teachable moment to explain that even if she is not physically close to them, they are always together and connected by an invisible string. This String connects parents to children, friends to friends, and families to pets. Because of the Invisible String, no one is ever truly alone. This book teaches an important lesson about how we are connected to those we love despite distance, absence and death.

The Moon Prince and the Sea by Daniela Rose Anderson, Et Alia Press, Little Rock, 2018.



This is a story of two real children with cancer, Sumit and Marina, who are treated for but ultimately die from their illness. They live in two very different worlds, rural India and the United States, but are bound together by dreams, gifts, and their common fates. Amidst the understandable sadness in the story, the strongest feelings and impressions are connection, compassion, and transcendence. Together, Sumit and Marina go hand in hand to a place of love and healing.

The Next Place by Warren Hanson. Waldman House Press, 1997, www.waldmanhouse.com.



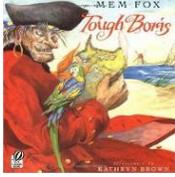
Striking illustrations and a first person text describe "the next place" the storyteller will go. The book presents a very peaceful and attractive description of the afterlife and is not overtly religious--does not identify with any particular religion. Many have found this book comforting and helpful.

The Spirit of Tio Fernando by Janice Levy, Albert Whitman & Company, 1995.



Tio Fernando died, but his spirit is remembered and met by his nephew, Nando, on the Day of the Dead in Mexico. As Nando prepares for his trip to the cemetery with his mother, customs and rituals for the Day of the Dead are introduced and experienced. The story, written in both English and Spanish, is well presented and can be a good starting place for learning about how different cultures express grief and celebrate continuing bonds with the dead.

Tough Boris Mem Fox, illustrated Kathryn Brown. Harcourt Brace & Co., 1994.



Boris von der Borch is an unforgettable pirate. He was tough, massive, scruffy, greedy, fearless, and scary. "But when his parrot died, he cried and cried." This simple, brightly illustrated book provides excellent reinforcement of the acceptability of expressing feelings, especially for those who have learned that it's not ok to cry. The illustrations also tell the story of a boy who sneaks on board the pirate ship in an effort to retrieve his stolen violin. He eventually recovers his violin, plays for the pirates, and is returned back home.

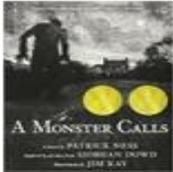
Wherever You Are My Love Will Find You by Nancy Tillman. Feiwel and Friends, 2010.



The strong message of this book is that there is nowhere a beloved child can go and nothing the child can do to prevent love from finding them. A child is presented in every illustration with the child interacting and playing with animals in a wide variety of natural settings. The child wears a hat and androgynous clothing, and the child's face is never presented clearly which allows the child to be a more universal figure. It is easy to imagine that this book could be used well when there is an expected separation of a child and a parental figure through death or other circumstances.

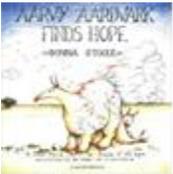
CHAPTER BOOKS

A Monster Calls by Patrick Ness, inspired by an idea from Siobhan Dowd, illustrated by Jim Kay, Candlewick Press, 2011.



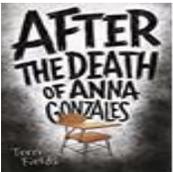
Thirteen-year-old Conor's mother is being treated for cancer and is not doing well. Conor has a repeating nightmare which he finds more terrifying than the literal monster which shows up outside his second floor window. The tension builds with multiple unexpected twists, and the journey of loss and healing for Conor is a powerful and wild thing. *A Monster Calls* is an intense, unsettling, magical and satisfying story.

Aarvy Aardvark Finds Hope by Donna O'Toole, illustrated by Kore Loy McWhirter. Compassion Press, 1998.



With the help of his friend, Ralphie Rabbit, Aarvy Aardvark comes to terms with the loss of his mother and brother. A special appeal of the story is how it respects the time it can take to feel better in grief. Toward the end of the story, Aarvy says, "Perhaps someday soon I will play again." The illustrations are purposefully not colored so that children can color them as they please.

After the Death of Anna Gonzales by Terri Fields. Henry Holt and Company, 2002.



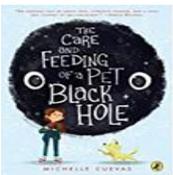
Fictional Anna Gonzales is a high school student who died by suicide. This brief but impactful book is a collection internal monologues from members of Anna's school community including friends, fellow students who didn't know her or know her well, a teacher, a security guard, and the principal. Each gives a different and realistic perspective of the many ripple effects of a teenager's death by suicide. The multiple perspectives, including a note from Anna, support the complexity of grief and of the impact of suicide.

Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson. Crowell, 1977.



Leslie and Jess are from different backgrounds, but they form a close friendship and create an imaginary, secret kingdom. The girl's tragic accidental death marks the end of childhood for Jess, but their shared experiences help him bear the loss.

The Care and Feeding of a Black Hole by Michelle Cuevas. Dial Books for Young Readers, 2017.



Eleven-year-old Stella is having a hard time. Her father died and she doesn't want to talk about it. She has an annoying little brother. And she has a stray miniature black hole as pet. The black hole becomes a home for everything and every memory that causes Stella stress, but eventually, she has to enter into the black hole to find her way to a better place. This is a funny, fantastical, and insightful story about memories and coming to terms with loss.

Each Little Bird That Sings by Deborah Wiles, Scholastic, 2005.



Comfort Snowberger is a 10-year-old girl who begins her story with "I come from a family with a lot of dead people." While this is true for all of us, Comfort has a special perspective as she lives in the residential part of a funeral home in a small southern town. Far from being depressed or frightened by her surroundings, Comfort is full of spunk and insight into life, people, and service to others. A comic and tender story about life, friendship, family and death.

Green Angel by Alice Hoffman. Scholastic, 2003.



A fifteen-year-old girl dives into despair following the sudden death of her parents and younger sister in a fire that was a community-wide disaster. Haunted by loss and the past, she eventually begins to heal through a series of mysterious encounters. A haunting, but ultimately hopeful, contemporary fable.

Harry Potter series by J.K. Rowling. Scholastic, 1999-2009.



There were seven *Harry Potter* books and eight *Harry Potter* movies beginning with *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* and ending with *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. Harry is an orphan as both of his parents were killed when he was an infant. Harry's grief in never knowing his parents and yet his strong connection to his parents are continuing themes in the books. Rowling has real insight into grief and its many facets and expressions. For reflections on the Harry Potter series as grief stories, go to <https://secure.archildrens.org/publications/GoodMourning-FEB2008.html>.

If Only by Carole Geithner, Scholastic Press, 2012.



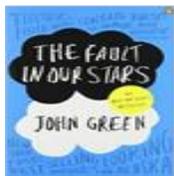
Corinna begins the 8th grade reeling from her mother's death from cancer over the summer. Corinna narrates the story of this first year in a new world without her mother's physical presence to comfort, guide, listen and keep the family running smoothly. Along the way Corinna discovers her mother's journal which exposes some important and distressing family secrets and shows her mother's struggles with expressing her concerns to her own family. The story ends as a new school year begins with a hard-earned realization of the consequences of her mother's death along with a sense of hope and resilience.

Possibles by Vaunda Micheaux Nelson. Paperstar, 1995.



Just before Sheppy's father died, he told her that anything was possible, but now Sheppy doesn't know what to believe. While Sheppy learns more about her father and his past, she, her brother, and mother all grieve differently and alone. Eventually, the family learns to support one another and mourn together. An unusually insightful book that deals with both grief and race issues with sensitivity and respect.

The Fault in Our Stars by John Green, Dutton Books, 2012.



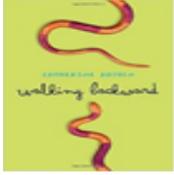
Hazel is a 16-year-old with an incurable cancer. She is sharp-tongued and has little tolerance for conventional perspectives of cancer, youth and death which, from her point of view, are too often dishonest, sappy attempts at inspiration and comfort. Gus is a 17-year-old who has had an above-knee amputation due to osteosarcoma and is no longer in treatment. Hazel and Gus reject the expectations others have for them in their roles as cancer patients, and the book is their story of connecting and making as much sense as possible in their sense-defying lives.

The Grieving Teen: A Guide for Teenagers and Their Friends by Helen Fitzgerald. Fireside, 2000.



Helen Fitzgerald has created a useful handbook for teens (and their friends) that serves as a reference for the emotional and practical aspects of grieving. It is helpfully divided into small, topical sections with a "what you can do" bullet-point list for each topic. Topics range from homework to emotional reactions to parent dating. May also be useful for parents of grieving teens.

Walking Backward by Catherine Austen, Orca Book Publishers, 2009, www.orcabook.com.

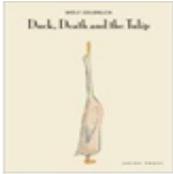


This is a quirky book with some darkly funny stuff, insights into families and grief plus information about mourning practices of different religions. Twelve-year-old Josh tells the story journal-style as his family reels from the strange accidental death of his mother. Trying to help his brother and himself, they start a "Mom book" scrapbook while his brother walks backwards so he can see everyone's face to remember in case they die. Over time, this unusual family finds ways to begin to live again and be together as a different kind of family.

PICTURE BOOKS WITH PROVOCATIVE METAPHORS

Especially good for older readers and adults.

Duck, Death and the Tulip by Wolf Erlbruch, Gecko Press, 2011 (first published in Germany, Verlag Antje Kunstmann GmbH, 2007).



“For a while now, Duck had had a feeling. ‘Who are you? What are you up to, creeping along behind me?’

‘Good,’ said Death, ‘you finally noticed me. I am Death.’”

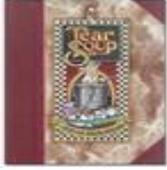
And so an unusual story and friendship begins. Much more is suggested than explained with both the characters and with the story. It is a strange and intriguing story, one that calls for rereading and pondering.

Mama Does the Mambo by Katherine Leiner, illustrated by Edel Rodriguez. Hyperion Books for Children, 2001.



“After Papa died, Mama stopped dancing.” Carnival time is approaching in Havana, Cuba, and Sofia is beginning to wonder if her beautiful mother will ever dance again. Possible dance partners are considered, but none can take the place of Papa. When Carnival finally arrives, Mama reaches out for Sofia. “I am dancing with Mama, and Mama is dancing the mambo again.” Several Spanish words are included in the story to help ground the story in the Cuban culture. An inspiring story of embracing life after loss.

Tear Soup: A Recipe for Healing After Loss by Pat Schwiebert and Chuck DeKlyen, illustrated by Taylor Bills. Grief Watch, 1999.



Grandy, “an old and somewhat wise woman,” sets out to make tear soup as a way to cope with her loss. Sometimes it takes a big pot and a long time to make tear soup. One can learn from others’ recipes, but in the end you have to find your own recipe. Often the soup is very bitter tasting in the beginning. Good soup making is hard work, and if it’s not tended to the soup can boil over and make a great mess. Eventually Grandy cleans up the pot and puts the rest of the soup in the freezer to “pull it out from time to time to have a little taste.”

TEACHING DEATH CONCEPTS

Lifetimes: A Beautiful Way to Explain Death to Children by Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen. Bantam Books, 1983.



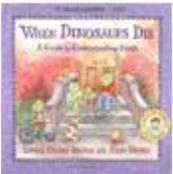
“There is a beginning and an ending for everything that is alive. In between is the living. All around us, everywhere, beginnings and endings are going on all the time. With living in between. This is true for all living things. For plants. For people. For birds. For fish. For trees. For animals. Even for the tiniest insect.” After exploring these themes for animals and plants, the same themes—beginnings, endings, and living in between—are applied to people. A gentle book to help introduce the concept of death to young children.

What Is Death? by Etan Boritzer, illustrated by Nancy Forrest. Veronica Lane Books, 2000.



A gentle-toned and brightly illustrated book which discusses "big" and basic questions about death in a very accessible way. This is one of the few books that deals with different ways that major religions understand death and dying including Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, and Jewish perspectives.

When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to Understanding Death by Laurie Krasny Brown and Marc Brown. Little, Brown and Co., 1996.



What does alive mean? Why does someone die? What does dead mean? How do people feel and what do they do after someone dies? What comes after death and what are ways to remember someone who dies? These are just some of the questions that are handled with gentleness and clarity in this excellent book for teaching children about death.

ADULT READERS: MEMOIRS

Can't We Talk about Something More Pleasant? —A *Memoir* by Roz Chast. Bloomsbury, 2014.



Roz Chast is a cartoonist whose work is often found in *The New Yorker* magazine. This memoir covers the last years of life for her elderly parents from the perspective of an adult child who both loves and is often exasperated by them. Chast is insightful, painfully honest, and funny as she tells her stories in words and cartoons (and a few photographs). It is a family story well-told of life, dying, death and the messiness along the way.

Dancing at the Pity Party: A Dead Mom Graphic Memoir by Tyler Feder. Dial Books, 2020.



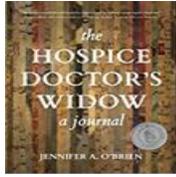
Tyler Feder's comic, sad, and insightful graphic memoir “gets” young adult grief like few other resources. Her story involves her mother's cancer and eventual death and the impact on Tyler and her family while Tyler was in college. Her wise insights into grief and its many social and emotional challenges are generalizable and useful to more than just young adults.

Everything Happens for a Reason and Other Lies I Have Loved by Kate Bowler. Random House, 2018.



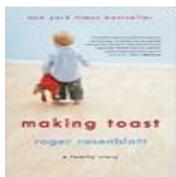
Kate Bowler was living a great life—dream job, married, young son—when she was diagnosed with stage IV colon cancer. She is still alive, working, raising her son, and living with cancer. Her memoir of her eventual diagnosis and treatment is a compelling combination of fear, humor, growth, and a deeper understanding of what is and isn't helpful when one is facing death. Bowler is a compelling, effective, and very vulnerable storyteller.

The Hospice Doctor's Widow: A Journal by Jennifer O'Brien. Et Alia Press, 2020.



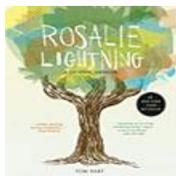
Jennifer O'Brien's husband was a doctor who supported families in palliative care and hospice. Her story is what happened when her husband needed to be the recipient rather than the provider of end-of-life care. It is both his story and her story, and it is told in a beautifully creative way with a combination of words, pictures, and graphics. Possible to read in one sitting, but its effect will last much longer.

Making Toast: A Family Story by Roger Rosenblatt, HarperCollins Publishers, www.harpercollins.com, 2010.



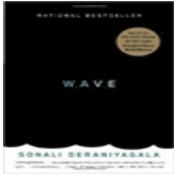
Following the death their 38-year-old daughter, Roger and his wife move in with their son-in-law and their three grandchildren. He reflects on his daughter's life as child, physician and mother. A talented and attentive observer, he describes the details of appearance, children's toys and activities, and the uneven steps of a family finding its way while all live with the pain and the differences in their lives. The family is not religious and the God in which Rosenblatt believes offers neither care nor comfort. How he finds a way to walk and "make toast" in this new family and unwelcome world is poignant and instructive.

Rosalie Lightning by Tom Hart. St. Martin's Press, 2016.



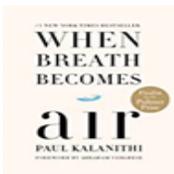
"Rosalie Lightning" is the name of a young girl with a huge personality whose life ended unexpectedly and much too soon. It is also the name of this compelling graphic memoir drawn and written by her father. Heartbreakingly honest and raw, it tells the story of how Rosalie's parents struggled to live after Rosalie's death and how they were inspired to continue living by the spirit that Rosalie embodied. A story full of pain, resilience, and ultimately hope.

Wave by Sonali Deraniyagala, Vintage Books, 2014.



The tsunami wave in the Indian Ocean on December 26, 2004 took the lives of Sonali Deraniyagala's children, spouse, and parents. In this memoir, Deraniyagala describes the facts of that day and the seven plus years that follows. It is a difficult story to read, not because of the writing, which is beautiful and often understated in style, but because the facts of the story are so overwhelming. In the end, it is a tale of losing, losing even more, and living in spite of. Haunting, heartbreaking, affirmation of life and living, and quiet, stubborn endurance. There is redemption here.

When Breath Becomes Air by Paul Kalanithi. Random House, 2016.



Paul Kalanithi wrote a powerful and brief travelogue about the “valley of the shadow of death.” He was drawn to that valley as a neurosurgeon and he was an involuntary traveler as a patient with terminal cancer. The beauty and irony of the book is that he walked that path as both physician and patient and he was a keen observer of both sides of the experience. A beautiful and tragic story told with remarkable honesty and vulnerability.

Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times by Katherine May. Riverhead Books, 2020.



We don't conquer winter, we find ways to survive it and sometimes even to learn in the midst of it. There are difficult times in all of our lives that come with limitations and restricted choices. According to Katherine May, these are our winters. One doesn't eliminate the cold in winter, one learns to live with it and sometimes even to lean into it. A thoughtful and wise reflection on realistic and helpful ways to live in life's difficult seasons.

The Year of Magical Thinking by Joan Didion, Vintage Books, 2005.



Joan Didion brings an unsparing lens to describe her first year after the sudden and unexpected death of her husband. Compounding her comprehension of and adjustment to what has happened, her adult daughter experiences a series of serious health crises. Didion reviews and ponders, trying to understand what has happened to her life and what is happening to her in the midst of it all. Her sharp insights and vulnerability benefit the reader in an experience very well told.

ADULT READERS: SUPPORTING OTHERS

Grief Therapy Techniques edited by Robert Neimeyer. Routledge, 2016.



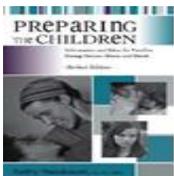
For professional counselors and therapists assisting grieving people, this is a remarkable and useful resource. Sixty-six brief chapters covering everything from assessment to group interventions to rituals. All techniques are informed by contemporary understanding of grief and loss.

Helping a Grieving Student: A Guide for Teachers developed by The Dougy Center, 2011,
www.dougy.org.



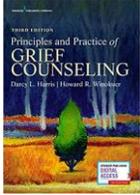
This user-friendly booklet has 50 pages of practical and helpful information for teachers from preschool through high school. Clearly and well-written and interspersed with quotes and drawings from grieving children, this book is a great resource for teachers wanting to be the best help and support possible for grieving students.

Preparing the Children: Information and Ideas for Families Facing Terminal Illness and Death by Kathy Nussbaum. www.preparingthechildren.net, 2012.



This helpful booklet addresses major sections are what children need during the terminal illness in the family, what children need during the death and following death rituals, and what children need to heal from their loss. Each section considers the particular needs in the context of a child's perspective and development, and each section has many real-life ideas for helping children understand what is happening in their lives. For adults supporting children in the face of the dying of a significant person, this book can be a great resource.

Principles and Practice of Grief Counseling by Howard K. Winokuer and Darcy L. Harris, Springer Publishing, www.springpub.com, 2019.



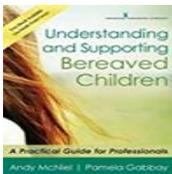
Principles and Practice of Grief Counseling helpfully starts with the basics of counseling and then examines what makes grief counseling different within the counseling world. Building on that foundation, the book explores the development of current thinking and understanding about grief and loss. Winokuer and Harris have feet in both academic and counseling worlds, and they bring insights from both along with frontline examples from their clinical experiences.

Supporting Children After a Suicide Loss: A Guide for Parents and Caregivers by Sarah S. Montgomery and Susan M. Coale. Chesapeake Life Center, 2015.



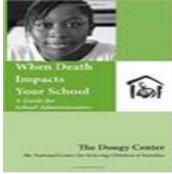
After a death by suicide, one of difficult challenges is talking about this death with children. Suicide is impossible to fully understand for adults left behind and can be even more challenging for children to understand. This very useful guide gives practical advice and multiple examples of ways to explain suicide and address a child's questions or concerns within the family and in the school setting.

Understanding and Supporting Bereaved Children: A Practical Guide for Professionals by Andy McNiel and Pamela Gabbay, Springer Publishing Company, 2018.



This book is a helpful response to the need for guidance for caring professionals supporting bereaved children. In ten concise chapters, Gabbay and McNiel present and expand upon an understandable theoretical framework for listening to and supporting bereaved children in both individual and group settings. Along the way, many helpful and practical tips and suggestions are given about engaging children and inviting their stories and their own meaning-making. A great starting place and resource for any professional wanting to do effective work with bereaved children and their families.

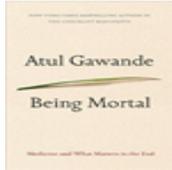
When Death Impacts Your School: A Guide for School Administrators developed by The Dougy Center, 2003, www.dougy.org.



This guide is a unique and practical resource for when death impacts a school community. Topics covered include planning for a crisis and tasks for crisis team, practical aspects of what to do during the school day, student and staff issues, and special considerations related to varying causes of death. Also very helpful is the inclusion of sample classroom announcements and letters to parents after a death, after a suicide, and after a violent death. A remarkably useful tool for principals and school administrators.

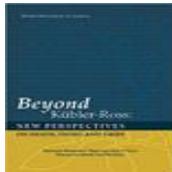
ADULT READERS: DIVERSE TOPICS

Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End by Atul Gawande. Metropolitan Books, 2014.



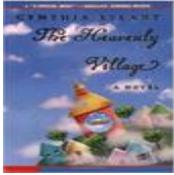
Dr. Atul Gawande writes on the challenges and limitations of modern medicine in the context of aging and illness which leads to death. He looks at the “big picture” of medicine and healthcare, especially in the United States, and also at personal stories including the story of his own father’s cancer and eventual death. Much of what he finds in our death/dying-avoiding healthcare system is distressing, but he also finds reasons to be hopeful in the growth and development of palliative care and its insights into the needed but difficult conversations about what is most important to patients when life is limited.

Beyond Kübler-Ross: New Perspectives on Death, Dying and Grief edited by Kenneth J. Doka and Amy S. Hospice Foundation of America, 2011.



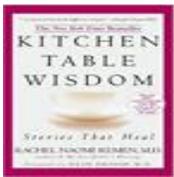
Elizabeth Kübler-Ross' observations of denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance among the dying described in *On Death and Dying*, published in 1969 have had remarkable staying power despite their misuse as “stages.” This book does a very effective job of summarizing many of the important insights gained about our response to loss in the past forty plus years while giving credit to Kübler-Ross for being the pioneer that she was. This is a brief book-only 152 pages-but it covers a great deal of needed ground for those wanting to take advantage of more contemporary grief insights.

The Heavenly Village by Cynthia Rylant. The Blue Sky Press, 1999.



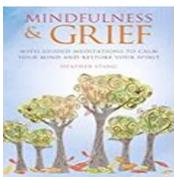
In this imagining of the afterlife, most of those who have died go straight to heaven, but there are some who are not quite ready. For these ambivalent souls, God has provided an idyllic "heavenly village" where unfinished business can be resolved. Rylant's spirituality includes the vision of spirits existing with God both before and after life on earth, and she uses quotes from the Bible, both from Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament. The Heavenly Village provides a dreamlike place where human needs for forgiveness, connection, and wholeness are understood, respected and supported.

Kitchen Table Wisdom: Stories that Heal by Rachel Naomi Remen, MD. Riverhead Books, 1996.



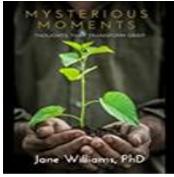
Dr. Remen is a physician, teacher and counselor and in this book she tells short stories from her professional work and her personal life as daughter and person with a chronic illness. Along the way, she shares her observations and insights into healthy and whole living in the midst of loss and illness. For more of her insightful and healing stories, see Remen's subsequent book, *My Grandfather's Blessings*.

Mindfulness and Grief by Heather Stang. Cico Books, 2018.



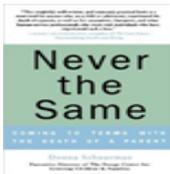
Much is being written and explored in the mental health world regarding mindfulness. Heather Stang presents a clear and accessible vision of how mindfulness practices can support grieving people. The book describes the connection of mindfulness approaches to the challenges of grief and offers a structured 8-week outline of progressive mindfulness and grief activities. For those interested in and open to mindfulness practices, this is a very helpful resource.

Mysterious Moments: Thoughts That Transform Grief by Jane Williams. Library Partners Press, 2017.



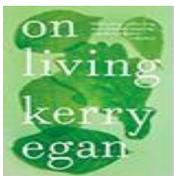
Williams' ten stories from real life are messy, nuanced and beautiful. They are accessible and compelling for those who grieve and those who support the grieving. Each is unique and comes from a different perspective including family members and those who experience loss in their professional roles—nurse, physician, chaplain and therapist. What each story shares is an experience where the perspective of the griever changes in a significant way, a way where burdens lighten and a new future is possible. These moments can come quietly yet their impact is huge in the life of the griever.

Never the Same: Coming to Terms with the Death of a Parent by Donna Schuurman. St. Martin's Press, 2004.



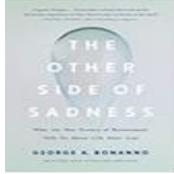
This book is especially written to adults who experienced the death of a parent during childhood. Filled with practical and well-researched wisdom about how loss affects us, how others affect our grieving, and how we can help ourselves even years after a loss, this book is a worthy guide for both those who grieve and those who want to help others. Topics covered include “forget the stages,” children and resiliency, how a parent’s death affects one as an adult, and what can be done now to address a parent’s death.

On Living by Kerry Egan. Riverhead Books, 2016.



Kindness and humility are the pervasive themes of beautiful collection of stories and reflections shared by hospice chaplain Kerry Egan. Kindness towards others, kindness towards suffering, towards human pain, shame and frailty, and towards ourselves. And humility in the face of mysteries found in life and living, death and dying. The stories she shares are remarkable and but not unusual. They are representative of all of us in our complexities, strengths and weaknesses.

The Other Side of Sadness: What the New Science Tells Us About Life After Loss by George A. Bonanno, Basic Books, 2009.



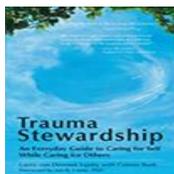
George Bonanno rightly proposes that many of the concepts that have often been taken for granted as true—concepts like “grief work”, stages of grief, the need to fully explore a loss in order to detach from the person who died—do not hold up to objective scrutiny when researched. Instead he has found is that most people are resilient and that humans are wired to grieve and cope in adaptive ways. Most, but not all, of us find a way to grieve well with the internal and external resources we possess when the death occurs, but this is not the story that is usually told.

Read This Till You Believe It by M.H. Clark, Compendium, 2016.



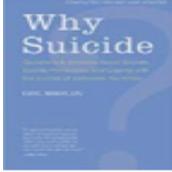
In this very short book--will take only minutes to read--there is recognition of pain and grief and there is also recognition of what remains and is possible. Just a few words on each page with evocative abstract illustrations--mostly blacks, grays, dark blue, and off-white. It begins with validation and ends with low-key affirmation and hope. The messages of affirmation and hope don't feel cheap or easy. They exist in a world of real pain and grief for which permission is given. Permission is also offered for steps toward healing, and we grieving people have the need to experience both permissions--to hurt and to heal.

Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky with Connie Burk. Berret-Koehler Publishers, 2009.



For those who work with grieving people and the hurt places in the world, this is a wise and needed book. Both practical and philosophical, there is much here for professional caregivers who find value in their work and want to keep doing it in a sustainable way.

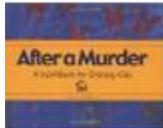
Why Suicide: Questions & Answers About Suicide, Suicide Prevention, and Coping with the Suicide of Someone You Know by Eric Marcus, HarperOne, 2010.



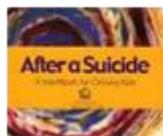
Journalist Eric Marcus brings both investigative and personal perspectives to questions experienced by survivors of suicide loss as his father killed himself when Eric was a boy. The book is organized as a series of questions and answers regarding basic understandings of suicide, methods, youth and elderly characteristics, attempts, treatment, prevention, and support for survivors. Throughout the book, Marcus combines information from research and data along with stories and testimonies of individuals who have struggled with suicidal ideation and who have had a family member or friend die of suicide.

WORKBOOKS

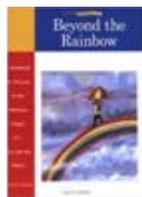
After a Murder: A Workbook for Grieving Kids by The Dougy Center, www.dougy.org.



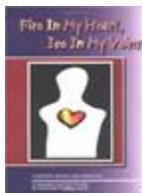
After a Suicide: A Workbook for Grieving Kids by The Dougy Center, www.dougy.org.



Beyond the Rainbow: A Workbook for Children in the Advance Stages of a Very Serious Illness by Marge Heegaard.



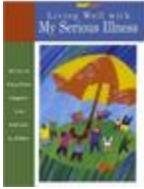
Fire in My Heart, Ice in My Veins: A Journal for Teenagers Experiencing a Loss by Enid Traisman.



Help Me Say Goodbye: Activities for Helping Kids Cope When a Special Person Dies by Janis Silverman.



Living Well with My Serious Illness by Marge Heegaard.



Saying Goodbye to Your Pet by Marge Heegaard.



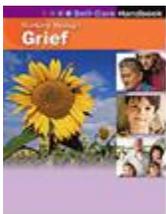
When Someone Very Special Dies: Children Can Learn to Cope with Grief by Marge Heegaard. Available in Spanish.



When Someone has a Very Serious Illness by Marge Heegaard.



Working Through Grief: Self-Care Handbook by Channing Bete Company, www.channing-bete.com. Available in Spanish.



Channing Bete guide for supporting grieving children



SOURCES FOR GRIEF-RELATED BOOKS, LITERATURE, AND VIDEOS

Centering Corporation
1531 North Saddle Creek Road Omaha, NE 68104
402-553-1200
www.centering.org

Compassion Book Service
477 Hannah Branch Road Burnsville, NC 28714
828-675-5909
www.compassionbooks.com