

## TOOL 11 – NOTES FOR GRIEVING CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS

### *It's okay to:*

- cry and feel low and depressed—you've lost a great deal
- feel angry, embarrassed and not want to talk about your feelings
- copy some of the activities and interests your brother or sister had before they died, but you need to retain your own life too
- 'live in the past' for a while—it can help you to keep alive the memory of your brother or sister, but try not to let life pass you by
- have fun and enjoy life, to laugh again and forget for a while, forgive yourself for the fights and arguments and nasty things you might have said to your brother or sister who died
- go on living.

### *It's not okay to:*

- use drugs or excessive alcohol to dull your senses—this can only act as an escape and hide the pain, it doesn't help to heal it and it will then take longer to accept the hurt
- act out your frustration with reckless driving or skipping school
- do things with your anger that can hurt other people because you are hurting yourself
- experiment casually with sex, just to get close to someone
- hide your feelings and avoid talking about what is bothering you to protect your parents or siblings
- act as the scapegoat or bad guy to appear tough.

### *Signs you might need to seek extra help:*

- prolonged deterioration in relationships with family and friends
- risk taking behaviour such as drug and alcohol abuse, fighting and sexual experimentation
- lack of interest in school and poor academic performance
- signs of chronic depression, sleeping difficulties and low self esteem
- dropping the activities that once meant so much to you.