



Who is M.I.C.H.A.E.L.?

Miracles to Inspire Change and Healing After Experiencing Loss (M.I.C.H.A.E.L.) is a 501(c)(3) organization focused on helping the healing process of children who have lost a parent due to violence. We provide:

- ❖ Grief counseling & education
- ❖ Therapy
- ❖ Support groups
- ❖ Mentoring
- ❖ Recreational activities
- ❖ Financial/holiday assistance

Do you struggle with finding the right words when someone is grieving?

Avoid saying:

- “I know how you feel.”
- “I’m sorry.”
- “You shouldn’t feel that way.”
- Any clichés, such as:
 - “Time heals all wounds.”
 - “He’s/she’s in a better place.”
 - “You’ll be okay.”
 - “Look on the bright side.”
 - “It’s time to put it behind you.”

Do say:

- “I’m sad to hear your father/mother/friend died.”
- “If you want to talk about what happened, I’m here to listen.”
- “Tell me about _____” (use the name of the person who died.)
- “I can’t imagine how hard this must be for you.”
- “I don’t know what to say, but I want you to know that I’m here if you need a friend.”

Remember: what you say is not as important as just being there. There is no way to make it “better” for your grieving loved one.



M.I.C.H.A.E.L. Organization

Helping children cope with the loss of a parent due to violence





Statistics

- ❖ 1 in 5 children will experience the death of someone close to them by age 18. (Kenneth Doka, Editor of OMEGA, Journal of Death and Dying)
- ❖ 1.5 million children are living in a single-parent household because of the death of one parent. (Owens, D. "Recognizing the Needs of Bereaved Children in Palliative Care" Journal of Hospice & Palliative Nursing. 2008; 10:1)
- ❖ Reviews of studies from various countries on childhood bereavement following parental death report that children in this situation do experience a wide range of emotional and behavioral symptoms.... The child often experiences an increase in anxiety with a focus on concerns about further loss, the safety of other family members, and fears around separation. (Dowdney, 2000; Haine et al., 2008)

How can you help grieving children?

- ❖ **Be honest**
Discuss the loss in a direct, age-appropriate way.
- ❖ **Allow the child to grieve in their own way**
Try to avoid projecting your own grief onto the child. Allow them to explore their own spectrum of emotions.
- ❖ **Be creative**
Assist the child in expressing their feelings through play, music, arts and crafts, or writing.
- ❖ **Share**
Tell the child about your own experiences with sadness, anger, fear, or confusion. Explain what helped you cope with these feelings and what you learned in the process.



How can M.I.C.H.A.E.L. help?

M.I.C.H.A.E.L. works to **empower** children and adolescents who have experienced loss, as well as enrich their developmental experience through **hope**. We address grief trauma as well as provide **support**.

Our organization helps youth connect with their peers who have shared a similar loss, to learn new coping skills, build resilience, and understand they are not alone throughout their healing journey.

Contact us today to learn more about how M.I.C.H.A.E.L. can impact the healing process of the youth in your life!

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