4 Tips for Children and Teens after a Sibling Dies

I was 15 when my big sister died, so I know it’s tough to lose a sibling. Sometimes siblings are best friends, and other times they fight a lot. Relationships with siblings aren’t always easy, and sometimes people say things they wish they could take back. Still, when someone in your family dies, you can have many different emotions, and they’re all okay. Whether you feel guilty, sad, relieved, or angry, everyone feels grief in different ways.
Here are four things that I’ve found helpful.

**Tip 1: Find someone to talk to.**

- As a sibling, you might feel misunderstood or like people don’t pay much attention to you. Adults don’t always know how to talk to kids or teenagers about grief, and some people might think that you don’t need help if you don’t ask. It’s important to find someone you trust that you can talk to about your feelings. This could be your parents, other family members, or maybe teachers or coaches. When my sister died, I had a hard time talking to my parents because I knew they were sad too, but I had friends, teachers, and other adults that made sure I was okay.

**Tip 2: Coping skills can help you express yourself.**

- You can express your feelings in lots of different ways, called coping. Playing sports or dancing can help you get your feelings out. Drawing or listening to music can calm you down. Talking to a friend or writing in a journal lets you share your feelings. It may take a couple of tries to find what works for you, but coping skills make you feel better and help you work out big emotions.

**Tip 3: Remember your sibling by sharing memories or creating a space to honor them.**

- Talking about the person who died can make you sad, but it also gives you a chance to share memories and think of happy times too. If your sibling lived in the same house as you, maybe you and your family can dedicate a space to remembering your sibling. While it is sad that my sister’s bedroom is empty now, my family keeps pictures and some of her favorite things in there to remember her by.

**Tip 4: Know that you’re not alone.**

- Losing a sibling can feel very lonely. At grief camps like Camp Erin or support groups, you can meet other kids going through the same thing. Books can also help you learn about grief and show you that you’re not the only person going through this.