Friends of Aine
Center for Grieving Children and Families
What is Friends of Aine?

Only organization in NH whose sole mission is to support Grieving Children and Families

• Born out of the tragic loss of Aine at age 8, and the recognition that bereavement services for Aine’s surviving 5-year old sister were scarce

Non-profit organization, 501(c)(3)

• Founded in 2013
The Need for Services

• 1 out of 13 NH children will experience the loss of a parent or sibling before the age of 18
  – Statistic does not include loss of an alternative “parental figure”
• Children not supported in the early phases of grief can develop serious emotional and behavioral problems
  – Research shows that participation in support programs can significantly reduce symptoms
• Limited availability of programming for children due to lack of medical insurance benefits and public funding for these services
Child Bereavement

Children’s Grief is Unique
• Children experience grief at the time of death but also relive the grief cycle repeatedly through each developmental phase of their childhood and adolescence

The Grieving Child
• Childhood bereavement is a public health issue
• Unsupported children may develop serious long-term effects
• 7 out of 10 teachers currently have at least one grieving student in their classrooms
  • Difficulty concentrating in class (observed by 87% of teachers)
  • Withdrawal/disengagement and less class participation (observed by 82%)
  • Absenteeism (observed by 72%)
  • A decrease in quality of work (observed by 68%)
  • Less reliability in turning in assignments (observed by 66%)
• Peer-to-peer Support Groups help – evidenced based
Manifestations of Grief

Emotional
- Shock, Denial, Anger, Sadness, Fear, Anxiety, Guilt, Self-blame
- And more...

Physical
- Tiredness, Shortness of Breath, Aches, Hyperactivity, Insomnia
- And more...

Behavioral
- Regression, Separation anxiety, School avoidance, Breakdown of peer relations
- And more...
What We Do

Peer-to-Peer Support groups:

- Runs throughout the academic year (3 eight-week series; 24 sessions total) with special events over the summer
- Groups are by age (L, M, TW, T, YA, A) and are activity based
- Groups are lead by volunteer trained facilitators
- Currently serving more than 40 families
- New Center at 226 Coolidge Ave
- All services **FREE** to grieving families
Helping Children/Teens Grieve

• Answer questions honestly
• Let them know you’re there for them
• Use age-appropriate and clear language
• Validate and acknowledge their feelings
• Maintain routines and schedules
• Respect different grieving styles
• Listen without judgment
• Give them a break; support caregivers
• Allow them to maintain the connection to their loved one
Questions??