



## 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

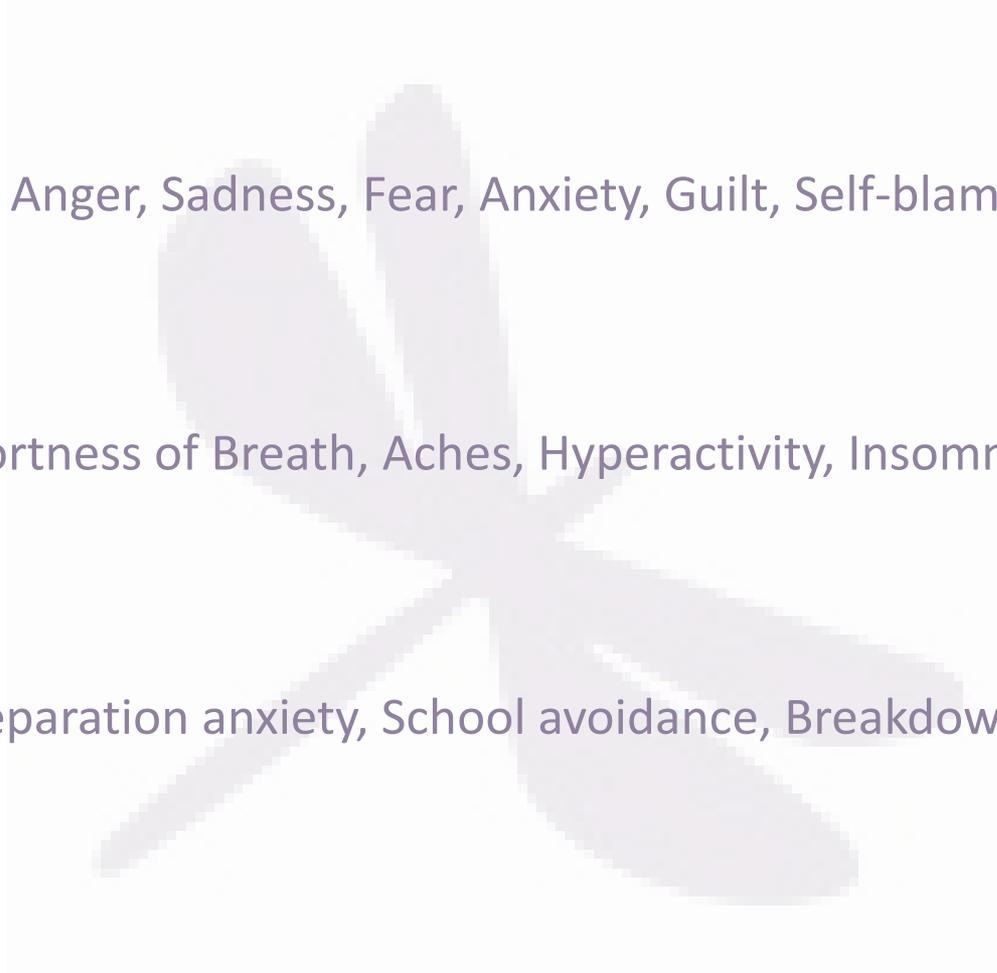
- Shock, Denial, Anger, Sadness, Fear, Anxiety, Guilt, Self-blame
- And more...

## 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





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Children and Families**

**Questions??**

