



# CULVER SCHOOL DISTRICT #4

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**STEFANIE GARBER, SUPERINTENDENT**

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April 8, 2024

Culver Families,

We write to you today with great sadness.

We have permission from the Nelson family to share that their beloved daughter, Jorja Nelson, died in an automobile accident on Sunday, April 7. Jorja was a junior at Culver High School.

Our thoughts and sympathies go out to Jorja's family, friends and our entire school community.

We will be sharing this with students today during first period and offering resources for processing their grief.

Sudden death is always tragic and can have a profound effect on children. All of us will be feeling a variety of emotions: shock, sadness, or confusion. It is important is that we care for and support each other during these difficult times. Some students may need additional guidance in dealing with or talking about their grief.

The Tri-County Response Team will be set up all day today in our library for students and staff. Additionally, we will have members of the district team in the school to support students on throughout the week.

Please find an additional SAMHSA resource attached, [Helping Teens with Traumatic Grief: Tips for Caregivers](#)

Please contact us at any time if you have questions or need support. 541-546-2541

In partnership,

Scott Novelli, High School Principal,  
& Stefanie Garber, Superintendent



## HELPING TEENS WITH TRAUMATIC GRIEF: TIPS FOR CAREGIVERS

Each teen grieves in unique ways. After a sudden or violent death some teens may develop traumatic grief responses and have difficulty coping. Here are ways to recognize and help your teen with traumatic grief. Being nonjudgmental, open to compromise, and considering your teen’s point of view are important.

I want you to know that:	You can help me when you:
<p>1. I may feel sad, scared, empty, or numb but be embarrassed to show my true feelings. Also know that, I may say too much on social media.</p>	<p>1. Say that it is painful when someone you care about dies. Talk to me about your own feelings and invite me to talk about mine, but know I might not be ready. Discuss the importance of thinking about what I'm sharing on social media.</p>
<p>2. I might have behavior problems that are new or worse than before (angry outbursts, irritability, rule breaking, revenge seeking). I may be doing serious, unsafe, or harmful behaviors (self-injury, risky sexual behavior, drug or alcohol use).</p>	<p>2. Have patience and try to remain calm while setting appropriate limits on behaviors. Encourage me to get back to routines and activities with friends. For serious, risky, or harmful behaviors, offer to get me outside help.</p>
<p>3. I have trouble concentrating and paying attention or may have a change in sleep patterns, such as staying up later or sleeping all day.</p>	<p>3. Realize that I may be having scary thoughts about what happened and not tell you. Talk with me about ways to cope, like getting back to enjoyable activities, or listening to calming music, or taking a technology break to help me to sleep better.</p>
<p>4. I may have physical reactions like jumpiness, stomach aches, headaches, a pounding heart, or body aches. These may be worse after being around people, places, sounds, situations or other things that remind him of the trauma or the person who died</p>	<p>4. Recognize that I may minimize physical reactions—or do the opposite—exaggerate a minor ailment or injury. Encourage me to use physical activities to release tension or to try relaxing things like deep breathing or gentle stretching.</p>
<p>5. I may think that life is meaningless, feel guilty for being okay, or withdraw from family and friends. I also may retreat to social media or gaming.</p>	<p>5. Discuss solutions for feeling sad and mention that, while social media can be helpful, it may be better seeing friends in person. Check with other adults I trust to discuss ways to support me. If I seem very sad or guilty, seek professional help.</p>
<p>6. Sometimes I wonder if something bad will happen to me or that other important people in my life. I may express this by appearing anxious, worried, seeming not to care about the future (not studying, skipping school), or doing risky things.</p>	<p>6. Help me develop a realistic picture of the dangers in life. Talk about ways for me to take control of my safety and future (e.g. driving carefully, eating well and exercising, asking others for help).</p>
<p>7. I may talk about feeling responsible for the death.</p>	<p>7. Give honest, accurate, and age-appropriate information. Teens get information from all kinds of media, so let me know you will always tell me the truth. If I feel responsible, reassure me to not worry; that I did the best I could at the time.</p>