Encourage

- Faith in the person
- Hope in possibilities
- Perseverance in distress
Share

- Feelings for the person
- Similar, hopeful experience
- Alternatives for consideration
Support

• **Commit** to walking with them
• **Go with them** to get help
• **Check in** with them
Boundaries

• What do I need?
• How am I being affected?
• What am I feeling experiencing?
Boundaries

• What does the **youth** need?
• What is the appropriate **place**?
• **Who else** might I include?
• Check institutional **policies**.
Helping Grieving Teens
Adolescent Grief - Differences

• Sudden and tragic losses
• More Isolation
• Need normalcy- distances grief/ identity as “grieving kid”
• Turn to internet for help
• Likely produce spiritual questioning
• Masked by other behaviors
Adolescent Grief

- Adolescents don’t grieve in the same ways adults do.
- They don’t move through the linear “stages” of grief
- **Initial** experience of grief lasting 2-4 weeks
- Resurfaces as something else (grades, act out) in 9-14 months
- Mark your calendar to check in - 9, 10, 12, 18, 24 months out
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Adolescent Grief

Anxious and Depressive Symptoms:

• increased **irritability** and/or rage
• decreased school performance - **grades**
• **isolation** and withdrawal from people and events
• beginning or increasing **substance use**
• **Panic** attacks
• **Sleep** problems
Helping Grieving Teens

• Teens need each other in the immediate aftermath
• Facilitate opportunities for them to gather and share
• Pray with teens who are suffering and grieving
• Help parents understand grief
• Provide safe place for parents to gather together to process feelings of shock, confusion, sadness and powerlessness
• Stay on the rollercoaster of grief even in the 3-9 month period when it feels like the ride is over—it’s not.
• Reach out, ask about them/loved one by name when others forget
What do I Say?

• **Rarely** what we SAY to survivors or to anyone who is traumatized and grieving, but who and how we are to them.

• It takes great **courage** to be really **present** to another’s deep suffering (we unconsciously want to avoid it and fix it but we can’t).
Listen & Be Present

• “Just checking in. How ya doin? You’ve been on my heart. I think about (name of victim) often and when I do, my heart hurts for you. How are you holding, handling, dealing with this?”

• Much of good listening and ministry of presence is showing up, shutting up and not changing the subject.
Helping Grieving Teens

- **Provide resources, referrals** to teens and parents who may need more individual assistance to process and heal.
- **Help teens find a way to “do” something** WITHOUT glorifying or sensationalizing the victim or the event—suicide awareness, etc.
Helping Grieving Teens

• Grieving teens come to you for *hope and healing* within your relationship.
• Don’t *want/expect you to fix them*. They want you to walk w/ them.
• *Don’t want cliche’s* like “God won’t give you anything you can’t handle.”
• Teens know that neither you nor they understand why God allows suffering and tragedy. They ask that question wanting you to “hold” them in a safe place—in relationship.
UNSPoken COMMUNICATION

Girls

Hi

Hi

Check out hair
Evaluate skin
Inspect jewelry
Judge makeup
Is that a real tan?
Is she or cutie?
Are her jeans cool?
Is her skin looking cellulite?
Are her jeans vintage?
Are her shoes cute or ugly?
Do her legs shaved?
Compare figure
Cuffs? Oh please!
Admire phone
Admire legs
I’ve seen that top
Be jealous of ankle bracelet
THE ANXIETY EPIDEMIC
So...what is Stress?
stress
/stres/

noun

1. pressure or tension exerted on a material object.
   "the distribution of stress is uniform across the bar"
   synonyms: pressure, tension, strain
   "the stress is uniform across the bar"

2. a state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances.
   "he's obviously under a lot of stress"
   synonyms: strain, pressure, (nervous) tension, worry, anxiety, trouble, difficulty; informal hassle
   "he's under a lot of stress"
Stress =

The feeling you get when you feel unable to meet expectations.
What is Anxiety?
Ambiguous Data → Worst Conclusions
Anxiety

• Generalizes
• Catastrophizes
• Nebulizes
Anxiety Types

- Generalized (GAD)
- Social (SAD)
- Separation
- Trauma (PTSD)
- Agoraphobia/ Spec Phobias
- Panic
STRESS Synonyms

- Pressure
- Worried
- Nervous
- Overloaded
- Anxious
- Overwhelmed
“I just can’t take the pressure anymore. I can’t be perfect. Would people just understand that?”

~10th grade boy with GAD, stomach ulcers, premature hair graying
STRESS: When is it a problem?

- Irritability
- Difficulty falling asleep
- Self Injury
- Depression / Suicidal Thoughts
- Apathy
- Dishonesty
“I just can’t put another thing on my plate. It’s overflowing… all good things but they’re stressing me out.”

~11th grade boy having panic attacks