



But I Didn't Say Goodbye: Helping Children and Families After a Suicide

Barbara Rubel

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But I Didn't Say Goodbye is a book seen through the eyes of Alex, an eleven-year-old boy, whose father has died by suicide. This story is a glimpse into a child's traumatic and life-changing personal experience. But I Didn't Say Goodbye introduces you to a bereaved family immediately after a suicide and ends five years later. The dialogue in each chapter will show you how you can help develop honest, open communication between children and the people in their lives. Alex's questions are the same as many other children following a suicide. Chapter 1, The Worst Day, focuses on the difficulty and emotional strain involved in telling children that someone they loved has died by suicide. Chapter 2, The Next Day, identifies the concerns children may think about and share as they search for answers as to why someone died by suicide. Chapter 3, Talking About the Funeral, illustrates the process of explaining funeral ceremonies and burial procedures to children. Chapter 4, Telling a Friend What Happened, explores the importance of sharing one's story for the first time. You will compare the bereavement experience of a five-year-old child, an eleven-year-old adolescent and fourteen-year-old teenager. Chapter 5, A Mourning Ritual, focuses on healing rituals adults can share with bereaved children. Chapter 6, Grandma's Special Gift, shows the significance of giving bereaved children special objects that once belonged to the deceased. You will identify how objects, individuals, and locations are capable of making children feel safe. Chapter 7, When Grief Hurts, takes a look at the grief response in children after a suicide. You will list ways to explain the grief process to children to help them cope with their painful feelings. Chapter 8, Catching Up with Coach, focuses on caring adults recognizing fears in grieving children and explaining ways to cope with those fears. Chapter 9, One Month Later, describes issues related to blame. Chapter 10, Six Months Later, identifies the benefit of bereavement counseling. Chapter 11, One Year Anniversary, reviews the lessons that have helped shape a child's experience a year after the suicide. Chapter 12, Five Years Later, illustrates ways to cope with triggers and continue the bond with the deceased five years after the suicide. A Resources section includes a list of books for bereaved children, teens, parents and professionals, bereavement resources and support after a suicide, information on how to locate adult bereavement support groups after a suicide, grief programs for children, teens, and families, sources to obtain financial information after a sudden death, and the national suicide prevention lifeline number.

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