

## Needs of Students

- An honest accounting of facts and relevant details.
- Some understanding of the biological aspects may be helpful.
- Understanding that the disease is not contagious; whether they are at risk.
- A sense of safety and security – stability of adults. Am I safe?
- Opportunity to verbally or actively process the event:
  - Talking, drawing pictures, listening to stories, hearing others talk.
  - To be actively involved in doing something helpful: cards for the family, planning a memorial activity for school, etc.
- Opportunity to ask questions. They deserve respectful and honest answers.
- Time for this to sink in.
- To address issues or rephrase the same question again (and again, and again).
- To know how the family is doing, whether there will be a funeral, etc.
- To be able to grieve, with others, in the context in which the deceased was known.
- To express their feelings, share memories and cry together.
- For adults to model their feelings.
- Lots of reassurance. Students need their feelings and experience validated.
- An opportunity to say "good-bye".
- Encouragement to realize that love goes on. (Gone but not forgotten.)
- Help understanding that pain eases over time as we process.
- Support from adults that going in and out of grief is fine -- that the intermittent experiencing of grief allows helpful breaks for fun and reprieve.
- Support their thoughts and feelings, expectation of appropriate behavior.
- Continued structure; maintain disciplinary code with some flexibility.
- Stable environment, predictable schedule (exceptions announced ASAP)

### **REMEMBER**

- Kids sense if something is wrong - NOT addressing it leaves FAR more for them to deal with later. It's best to do all you can do now.
- It is better to be honest about what you observe ("I can see you are scared") than to be artificially cheerful.

