



SUSSEX COUNTY TECHNICAL SCHOOL

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Dear Parents and Guardians,

As you know, our school was saddened to learn of the sudden passing of Junior student Nathaniel "Nate" Vaughan. We have had our counselors and the Traumatic Loss Coalition available to our students and staff all day so that we had sufficient supportive resources at the ready. However, we want to take a moment to help you recognize signs and symptoms of grief that may need your attention and what to do.

**It is normal for your teen to be withdrawn or seek the comfort of friends at this time, spending more time on their phones or social media. You know what their normal patterns are so if it deviates significantly or in a concerning way, check in with them.*

**Students who have suffered their own losses (recent or not) may be more sensitive to this news and may feel overwhelmed by their feelings. It can conjure up their feelings of loss all over again even if it happened some time ago.*

**Some students are just naturally sensitive to emotional news like this and even if they did not know Nathaniel, they may still have a strong grief reaction.*

**If someone in your family is significantly ill, today's news can also trigger sadness or behavioral changes.*

**If your child has or you suspect that they have an underlying mental health challenge, you may see those symptoms be exacerbated.*

Grief in youth can take many forms, just like adults. Some become withdrawn, some need more privacy, some seek more time with their peer group. Others may be easily angered and will act out. Others may turn to substance use. Young teens often do not have sufficient life skills to help them navigate the strong feelings they are experiencing. Grieving is not always predictable either. They may seem fine today but break down tomorrow or vice versa.

The key is knowing your child and recognizing when things seem out of character for them.

If you are concerned about their behavior or are fearful of their safety, please consider the following resources:

Sussex Tech Student Center-973-383-6700 x329 (school hours only)

Sussex Tech Guidance-973-383-6700 x224 (school hours only)

Newton Medical Center-Psychiatric Emergency-973-383-0973 (24/7) (call only)

2nd Floor (Hotline)-888-222-2228 (24/7) (call or text)

NAMI hotline- Text "home" to 741 741 (24/7)(text only)

Your local church/synagogue/mosque

Check the number on your insurance card and call for therapists in your network or go online to their website to determine the therapist most convenient for you

Please use this link for all kinds of supportive resources in Sussex County:

<https://www.sussex.nj.us/cn/webpage.cfm?tpid=15520>