Talking to Young Children About Death

PARENTS CORNER

• Just as we encourage you to fully participate in your immediate or in the future.
  • Professional experience with children has shown that they want to protect their children from emotional pain. Many feel helpless when trying to explain death, or they want to protect their children from emotional pain.
  • Be a role model for your children — Set a good example for your children by freely sharing your feelings.
  • Place a picture or favorite toy in the casket or in the grave.
  • Write a letter or draw a picture.
  • Talk to the loved one who has died.
  • Complete a project that the children were working on.

Keep the memory alive

• Provide them the opportunity to say “goodbye” — Reassure your children.
  • There is no inappropriate way to express feelings or confusion to children.

Help your children understand the reality of death

• Maintain routines as much as possible — It may help your children to remain in their home or room, and with familiar loved ones. Even though a death has occurred, your children’s lives need to go on.
  • Help your children understand the reality of death — Your children may need to see or touch the body to help them understand death.

Saying goodbye is important for children. There are a number of ways that may help them say goodbye.

• Go forth to seek the summer surely to come
  • Visit the good, the bad, and the ugly but don’t stay
  • Enjoy the fresh flowers of today

Reaching Out for Support

Great love brings great grief. Be thankful for both. Even though grief is a normal, natural response to loss and death, many people are still unprepared for the depth of the pain they experience. People often hear messages that imply they “should be better by now” or “everyone experiences grief, and counseling isn’t necessary.”

So often, people don’t reach out to others for support, thinking they should be able to handle their grief themselves. In fact, you may have been convinced by others that you should be over your grief by now, even though it may only be a few weeks or months since the death. This tendency to be unemotionally detached from the social support that is a necessary component of the healing process can prove to be unhealthy, depriving you of the social support that is a necessary component of the healing process.

Many feel helpless when trying to explain death, or they want to protect their children from emotional pain.

Just as we encourage you to fully participate in your healing journey, you can help your children heal by following these guidelines:

• Be a role model for your children — Set a good example for your children by freely sharing your feelings with them. If you hide your grief, they lean to hide there, too. It is OK for your children to see you angry, sad, crying and relieved. You allow them to see what you are really feeling. This also gives them permission to express the same feelings. It is OK to let your children know if you do not understand something. They need to know that their emotions and confusion are normal and acceptable.

• Tell your children immediately when the death occurs — Sently explain what has happened, what is happening now and why you may be crying.

• Explain the death in terms that your children can understand — Use correct terms such as die, dying and dead. Words and expressions like sleeping peacefully, passed away, departed, expired and lost are confusing to children.

• Do not force feelings of grief — Allow your children to express their feelings naturally, in their own way and in their own time.

• Really listen to what your children are asking or saying — To understand what they are expressing, you may need to ask further questions.

• Provide them the opportunity to talk — Help your children through their grief.

• Remember the joys of yesterday — Invite someone new.

• Remember the joys of yesterday — Invite someone new.

• Reassure your children.
  • You will find suggestions and information that will help validate your feelings and normalize many of the reactions you may experience. You may be asked to challenge societal myths or time-honored expectations about grief in order to help you heal.

Getting through grief — not over or around it — means finding the courage and strength to lean into your pain. As a companion through your journey, Sharp HospiceCare offers many services to let you know you are not alone, from support groups to bereavement counseling. We’re here to help. If you would like to talk about your loss, reactions or concerns, or if you have any questions about our services, call 1-844-981-9188 to speak to a bereavement counselor.

Sincerely yours,

The Bereavement Department of Sharp HospiceCare

Sharp HospiceCare strives to bring comfort to those working through the grieving process. Bereavement counselors provide a supportive, confidential environment for families and friends dealing with the loss of a loved one. To learn more about Sharp HospiceCare, including support groups, call 1-844-981-9188.

Healing Through Grief

ISSUE 01
Grieving is a natural healing process that moves slowly from the pain of loss to hope for the future. Although grieving has been studied, no one can understand your grief or your way of cooperating with the natural healing process.

Share your feelings of regret — When your thoughts linger on past mistakes, real or imagined, you may find relief by expressing and discussing your regrets with other people. Eventually, you will be able to forgive yourself and release the troubling memories.

Grieving is a natural healing process. You may find comfort and companionship now and hope for the future.

Avoid bottling up anger — At times, you may feel intensely angry at the person who died or at family members, health care professionals in people who have been spared a similar loss. Expressing and sharing the anger in healthy ways can hasten the healing process.

Turn to faith — A loved one's death can challenge your faith or philosophy. Life: Questioning your beliefs can be frightening, but it also can deepen and enrich your faith or philosophy.

Postpone major decisions — After the death of your loved one, you may face many practical decisions ranging from disposing of your loved one's belongings to determining your own future. Many people find it helpful to move slowly with these tasks and decisions, if possible. You may want to postpone major decisions for up to a year.

Plan holidays and special occasions carefully — Holidays, anniversaries and birthdays can be very stressful. Make sure you have the time and support you need to confront the feelings that the holidays raise so you can use these occasions to move your healing process forward.