

How parents can support their child's wellbeing following a bereavement.

- Grieving is different for everyone, there is no set patterns or times limits to grieving. However, adolescents are likely to experience more heightened emotions and could feel overwhelmed.
- Those who are grieving don't usually need an expert, but familiar people who care about them.
- During this time, it is important to maintain normal routines at home.
- Acknowledge your child's loss - it is important that children and young people find safe ways to express their feelings.
- The stigma around suicide can prevent people from talking about it and leave those affected feeling isolated.

How to talk to your child about their feelings following a loss:

- Be guided by your child.
 - Your child may want to talk or may not want to talk. It is important to let them know that you are there to talk to if and when they want.
 - Give space, allow your child time not to talk if they do not want to.
 - Create opportunities to encourage talking.
 - Spend time with your child, doing things – walking the dog, watching a movie etc.
 - Respect how your child is feeling, everyone is different.
 - Your child may feel responsible, angry or guilty. Recognise and express what feelings your child is experiencing. Give reassurances they are not to blame and a range of responses are normal.
 - Do not say that they should be feeling better or dismiss their feelings.
 - Actively listen and reflect back what your child is saying, try not to judge.
 - Do not change the subject if your child mentions the person who has died. Encourage your child to share memories and where possible take part in a memorial of some kind.
 - Be honest about your own feelings and share them.
 - Encourage your child to seek support if they are struggling to manage.
 - Peer support – if maybe useful for your child to talk with other students. However, if they suspect that their peer may struggling then they should tell an adult immediately.
 - Texts may help to maintain communication.
 - Encourage other family members to talk to and spend time with your child.
- Recognise that if your child has experienced other stressful situations they might find this harder to manage. This could trigger feelings from the past. Situations to be aware of are:
 - Previous bereavement
 - Family separation
 - Trauma

- Behaviour changes to be aware of:
 - Sleep patterns - too much or too little.
 - Eating - a lack of appetite or over eating.
 - Going out - more than usual or not wanting to go out with friends, go to school, attend clubs etc.
 - Physical changes - bowel movements, irregular periods, reporting illness.
 - Anger - hypersensitive – overreacting to minor stresses, having anger outbursts at home at school.
 - Anxiety
 - Poor concentration
 - Withdrawing
 - Low mood, low energy - depression

Some of these changes may occur as part of the normal grieving process. It is important to recognise the change and steer your child towards to the usual behaviour. If you notice significant changes over a period of time and you are worried seek support.

- Overall help the home to be a safe nurturing environment for your child:
 - Encourage healthy eating,
 - Good sleep,
 - Continued participation in enjoyable activities.
 - Contact with supportive friends.
 - Exercise where possible.
- Remember to take care of yourself and gain support from family friends or professionals.

Places to seek support:

- School
- CAMHS
- GP Services
- Educational Psychology Parent Advice Service – for advice and signposting. 0208 820 7519
- Off Centre - a counselling, therapy, advocacy, advice and psychosocial service for young people aged between 11 and 25 who live, work or study in Hackney.
- Derman Counselling Service – for the well-being of Turkish and Kurdish Communities

Websites to seek further support:

- Childhood Bereavement Network - www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk
- Cruse – www.cruse.org.uk
- Winston's wish – www.winstonswish.org.uk
- St Joseph's Hospice – www.stjh.org.uk
- Saneline – www.sane.org.uk
- MIND – www.mind.org.uk
- Off Centre - www.offcentre.org.uk/
- Derman - derman.org.uk/derman/our-services/counselling-service