

Supporting a Young Person with Bereavement

Children of all ages can experience bereavement when someone close to them dies. This might be a family member, friend or pet. There is not one way to react following a death, everyone experiences bereavement differently.

Statistics:

We all experience bereavement during our lives. It is estimated that 92% of people will experience a significant bereavement before their 16th birthday (Child Bereavement UK).

10 TOP TIPS for supporting a young person with bereavement:

- 1 Be open and honest.** Be as open and honest as possible while considering age. Use clear and simple language and try to answer any questions (which might be repetitive).
- 2 Encourage talking and listen.** The young person might be scared to cause upset by talking. Try not to pressure them, but let them know it is ok to talk and that you are there to listen.
- 3 It's ok to feel mixed emotions.** Don't be scared to cry in front of the young person. Reassure them it's normal to feel a range of emotions. It's ok to be upset and it's ok to be happy too.
- 4 Be patient.** We all cope better on some days than we do on others. Try to be patient and give reassurance that you are there to support. Remember we all grieve differently.
- 5 Stick to a routine.** Stick to a normal routine as much as possible. If the young person can go to school this can be a good way of providing routine.
- 6 Spend time together.** Spend time with the young person relaxing or doing activities you both enjoy. This can reduce stress and help you talk to each other.
- 7 Help them feel included.** Involve the young person in planning to say goodbye. Activities such as writing a letter, lighting candles or visiting a special place can help.
- 8 Provide opportunities to remember.** Support the young person remember the person who has died. One activity is to create a memory box with photos and special items.
- 9 Inform those working with the young person.** If others are aware of the bereavement they can be sensitive and provide support if needed. Also discuss this with the young person.
- 10 Look after yourself.** Don't feel guilty if you feel unable to help due to your own situation, you need to look after yourself too. Support the young person to also talk to others who can help. If you are concerned seek additional help.

Self-help links:

- www.healthscotland.com/uploads/documents/154-When%20someone%20dies-October2018-English.pdf
- www.gcbn.org.uk/
- www.childbereavementuk.org/
- www.winstonswish.org/
- www.crusescotland.org.uk/
- www.hopeagain.org.uk/
- www.apartofme.app/ - App

