



Talking about Death with a Child

Grief is a natural part of life, and children experience it too. This infographic offers practical advice and support to help you talk to your children about death in a sensitive and understanding way. We believe open and honest communication is key to helping children cope with the death of a loved one.



Tell the truth about what happened in small doses

When a loved one has died, it is important for children to hear the news as soon as possible. Be open and honest, but avoid overloading a child with information or detail. Only give as much information as the child can handle - this will become clear by the questions they ask

Make time to build memories

Don't be afraid to share memories of your loved one. Research shows that the pain of re-living memories or sharing stories actually aids in healing and closure.



Check your child's understanding

If a child asks a question you're unsure how to answer, try asking them what they think. This can give you valuable insight into their understanding and why they're asking.

Use simple, real language

It is important to use real words such as 'dead' and 'died' rather than 'lost' or 'gone' - this reduces confusion and helps the grieving process.



Be comfortable saying, "I don't know."

It's OK to not have all the answers. Explain this to the child and let them know you will come back with an answer if you can.

Let your child grieve in his or her own way

Children grieve differently. They often express feelings through behaviour, and their understanding of death depends on their age. Some children might withdraw, others may express anger, some might avoid talking about it, and some may appear unaffected. All of these reactions are normal and don't mean a child isn't grieving.



Be open about your feelings

Seeing you grieve during and long after your loved ones death will let child know that it's normal and healthy to cry and feel sad.



Let your child know about plans

Prepare the child for the funeral - explain what it is, what they'll see, who will be there, and what's expected of them. Discuss any routine changes and how long to expect them. If you need to leave, reassure them about when you'll return. This will help them feel safe and supported.

For more information, resources and support visit: childbereavementuk.org or mariecurie.org.uk/information/grief

For information about Hospice Isle of Man's Young Persons Support visit: hospice.org.im/supporting-you



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