



SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG
PEOPLE ACROSS GRAMPIAN

OUR SERVICES

TELEPHONE

A telephone service to give advice & support either in the immediate aftermath or at a later date should issues arise.

BOOK GIFTING

Over 50 specialist titles covering all situations and arm families with knowledge and provides the opportunity to discuss what has happened

COVID 19

Due to the current social distancing restrictions ,our responder service and activity days are suspended but please contact us via telephone or email. Also check our Facebook page for new posts and Facebook Live Q & A sessions.

Contact Us

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SCO39521



Talking to a child about bereavement

INFORMATION FOR
PARENTS & CARERS

Talking to Children about Bereavement

Many families are coping with the death of a special person in their lives. This leaflet is to provide some guidance on how to speak to children and young people about their grief.

Younger children do not understand that death is permanent, so they are likely to continue to ask when the loved one will be coming back. It is more helpful to use the words; dead, dying and death, rather than other descriptions which can cause confusion for younger children.

Older children and young people who do understand that death is permanent, need to have information about what has happened and it is helpful that this is kept as honest as possible.

When breaking the news of a death, it is helpful to do this as calmly as possible and by someone who the child knows and trusts.

Explaining to the child that the body has stopped working, that the person can no longer see, hear or feel pain, and their heart has stopped working.

Reassure the child or young person that nothing they have thought, said or done caused the person to die.

Answer the child's questions as honestly as you can. Provide opportunities for children to ask the questions and reassure them they can ask at any time. Younger children will take much longer to process what has taken place.

It is okay for children to see adults upset; reassure the child that it is okay to be upset and this is normal.

Remind the child and young person, that while the loved one is dead and they will no longer be able to see them or speak to them, they will always have the memory of times they spent together.

Reassure the child or young person, that whatever they are feeling and thinking will be normal. It is okay to be sad or not be sad. It is okay for them to laugh and smile, or to cry.

Encourage the child to find ways to express their grief; children often don't know how to do this as they have a fear of upsetting the adult. Reassure them that they will not upset you and it is normal for you to be upset at this time.

If the child or young person finds it hard to speak to a parent, suggest speaking to another relative or friend.

If the child cannot attend the funeral find a way to help the child still be part of this, by choosing a special flower, drawing a picture to put in the casket, or writing a poem.

Bereaved children often become anxious about someone else dying, and that they may be left alone. Help the child identify their extended family members and network of close friends who would always be there to look after and care for them.

Above all provide the child and young person with space to process what has happened. Keep communication open, it maybe sometime before they feel able to share their feelings and emotions.

