
School Resources

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Other helpful phrases:

"I'm ready to listen if you feel like talking."

"Let's talk about what would make you feel more comfortable."

"Expressing your fears and pain can help you through this hard time."

Community Resources

**Crisis Services 24-Hour Adult
Hotline (Erie County)**
(716) 834-3131

**Crisis Services 24-Hour Adult
Hotline**
(Genesee County)
(585) 283-5200

**Spectrum C.A.R.E.S. Youth under
18
24-Hour Hotline**
(Erie County)
(716) 882-4357

Crisis National Textline: 741741

Helpful Links

Preparing Your Child to
Attend a Funeral

<http://akronschools.org/preparingyourchild>

The Dougy Center: The National
Center for Grieving Children and
Families

<https://www.dougy.org/grief-resources/>

Parent Guide to Grief and Loss



When death impacts the life of your child or teen, it is often overwhelming and difficult to know how to help.

This brochure can assist in creating an open and empathetic environment to provide support and restore feelings of control for your child.

CONVERSATION STARTERS TO SUPPORT A GRIEVING CHILD

Be available to listen. Start by addressing your own sadness and confusion about the death and ask your child to share their own reactions.

Validate whatever you hear with phrases such as, "I can appreciate your sadness/anger/confusion."

Be prepared for, "I don't know," responses and validate that as well with, "I understand that when something like this happens, it can be hard to know how you feel."

Rumors or inaccurate information can be spread. It can be helpful to explain that gossip and judgments based on partial information should be avoided.

Your child may be concerned for a friend or classmate. Encourage them to support their peer and to reach out to an adult.

Continue to keep channels of communication open!

Do:

- Follow routines as they provide a sense of safety and comfort.
- Prepare your child for their return to school by making a plan with support staff, if needed.
- Set limits and address risk taking behavior immediately.

DON'T:

- Act as if nothing happened.
- Make statements about how people will or will not feel in the future.
- Force your child to talk about their feelings.
- Assume that your child is coping well, even if they appear to be.
- Take a grieving child's anger personally.
- Neglect your own grieving process as it can affect your child.

Unhelpful phrases:

- "You will get over it."
- "I know just how you feel."
- "You'll be stronger for this."
- "You should/shouldn't feel..."

REACTIONS TO LOSS AND GRIEF

Children will grieve differently based on their personal and family experiences. Below is a list of normal grief reactions and helpful parent responses.

Disbelief

"This can't be true."

Acknowledge the disbelief and anticipate that once the shock has worn off, there may be more of an emotional reaction.

Confusion

"Why did this happen?"

Recognize that we all try to find a reason for things we don't understand.

Anger

Allow and acknowledge some expression of anger. Suggest that sometimes behind the anger there are often feelings of pain and fear. This can lead to a more helpful conversation.

Guilt

"I should have..."

Children may feel some level of responsibility for the death. In a reaction similar to confusion, they may blame themselves as a reason this happened. Clearly communicate to them that it is not their fault.