



KIDS + GRIEF



TALKING TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT EMOTIONALLY CHARGED TOPICS IS CHALLENGING AND DELICATE. DON'T BE AFRAID TO ENTER INTO THESE IMPORTANT CONVERSATIONS. THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER WHEN TALKING WITH YOUR KIDS ABOUT GRIEF AND DEATH IS TO REMAIN PRESENT, GROUNDED, AND OPEN. IT IS NOT SCARY FOR KIDS TO HAVE THESE CONVERSATIONS; IT IS SCARY FOR KIDS TO BE LEFT ALONE TO COPE WITH THEIR BIG FEELINGS ON THEIR OWN... YOU GOT THIS!

CONVO PREP

Help child prepare their body for big feelings
State the situation factually and in a straight-forward manner
Pause – hold space for feelings and questions

Tools for Talking to Kids

- ☐ Tell the truth
- ☐ Validate feelings
- ☐ Answer questions
- ☐ Hold space for processing
- ☐ Check in regularly
- ☐ Follow their lead

Tools for Regulating Yourself

- ☐ Breath
- ☐ Nutrition / Hydration
- ☐ Sleep
- ☐ Movement
- ☐ Sunlight
- ☐ Connection



A NOTE ON REASSURANCE:

It is common and reasonable to want to reassure your child in the face of the death of a loved one. However, our goal is to remain factual and honest during these conversations. Therefore, it may be better to hold the space and tolerate the big feelings expressed rather than try to shift them through reassurance. Remember, our job as parents is NOT to convince them out of their feelings, it is to support them through their feelings.

ENCOURAGE NORMALCY

Encourage your child to participate in the types of activities, socialization, movement, diet, etc. that is “normal” for them. Children experience structure and consistency as symbols of safety and security – give them those opportunities. Allow breaks as needed.

Common Reactions Following Traumatic Loss

Physical

- Appetite change
- Dizziness
- Shaking
- Headaches
- Sweating
- Increased desire for touch

Cognitive

- Confusion
- Nightmares
- Hypervigilance
- Disorientation
- Blame
- Change in attention, memory, problem-solving

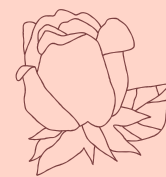
Emotional

- Fear
- Guilt
- Anxiety/panic
- Irritability
- Sadness
- Depression
- Anger
- Change in ability to self-regulate

Behavioral

- Withdrawal
- Inability to rest
- Change in speech pattern
- Change in social activity
- Change in energy/activity levels

ONLINE RESOURCES



Podcasts

[Dr. Becky - How to Talk About Death with Your Kids](#)

[Dr. Becky - When Talking to Kids About Hard Things, Choose Truth Over Comfort](#)

[David Kessler and Brene on Grief and Finding Meaning](#)

[How to Support Kids who are Grieving, Bittersweet Relationships & Personal Loss](#)

Articles

[Grief by Age: Developmental Stages and Ways to Help](#)

[Bereavement - How children grieve and how parents can support them](#)

[After A Crisis: How Young Children Heal](#)

[Age-Related Reactions to a Traumatic Event](#)