

Supporting Grieving Children & Teens During COVID-19

Engage in Family Self-Care

Children watch for cues on how to respond to grief. Show them how to tend to physical, mental, and emotional health.

- **Body:** Drink water, eat nourishing foods and rest. Move your body each day, even if you're sheltering at home.
- **Brain:** Consider limiting media consumption. Practice supporting your nervous system through meditation, deep breaths, or grounding exercises.
- **Heart:** Make space for whatever emotions and thoughts come up. Remind your children and yourself "I'm doing the best I can in this moment."

Establish Routines

Consistency helps promote a sense of control during times of uncertainty. Work together as a family to set a schedule and small goals each day.

- Set aside time each day for family self-care.
- Include things that happen at regular times, such as morning wake-up, meals, walking the dog, and bedtimes.
- Try remaining flexible and make space for unstructured time.

Make Time for Grief and Remembering the Person Who Died

With so much happening, setting aside time to talk about grief as a family remains important. Possible discussion starters could include:

- How is your grief behaving today?
- What's helping you the most?"
- What do you miss the most about them today?

Reach Out and Stay Connected

Grief can feel isolating - even under the best circumstances - so keep cultivating social connections during this time.

- Technology enables video chats or phone calls with friends and family.
- Explore websites, podcasts, and groups on social media.
- Stay in touch with letters and postcards.

Be Honest with Kids

Just as with grief, there will be questions you have answers to and ones that you don't.

- Encourage children and teens to ask what they are wondering about.
- It's ok to say "I don't know." Reassure children that you will tell them as soon as you know more.
- Identify reliable sources of information to decrease misinformation.

Welcome Diversions

It's okay to have fun and take breaks – both from grief and concerns about the global health crisis.

- Create a list of ways to have fun, including solo and group activities. Examples include board games, puzzles, scavenger hunts, dance parties, or having a talent show.
- Use technology to invite friend and family participation.