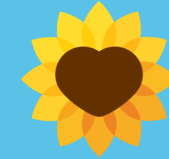




East Cheshire Hospice
Where people come to live



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Caring for a grieving child

Supporting children & young people



For those caring for a child

What your child is going through may be very normal – but it may not feel that way! And how are you to know if it is, or not, especially if this is the first time you have helped a child through this, and if you yourself are feeling lost, terribly upset and a whole host of other feelings right now.

Below are some things that may help you support a child through this time:

Be honest and real – try not to use words that are not accurate – i.e saying someone has gone to sleep rather than died – as often this confuses children and scares them more than the real words. Sometimes we do this to comfort us rather than the child, as we can't bring ourselves to use the hard, real words, but children often respond better to the real and accurate words.

Help create a safe space for your child to talk or show you how they are feeling. Some children don't have the words and they may show you through play, or arts or stories. You might feel that you are not up to doing this right now, as you yourself have a lot to deal with – that's ok. See if you can find someone who is, that might be a friend or a relative, or talk to our team here, we may be able to help support you through this.

Nightmares and strong feelings are common, as is the opposite, bottling it all up and seeming 'normal'. Remember there is no 'normal' way of dealing with this, every child is different.

Some children develop fears and anxiety and become clingy, some will be angry and start getting into trouble at home or school, some will seem to not notice and distract themselves by doing things, others may withdraw and become very quiet. Some children will show a change in appetite, headaches, stomach aches and sleeplessness.

You know your child best so whilst all this is normal under the circumstances, if you're worried about how your child is responding, talk to a member of our child support team and we can help you work out if you need extra support right now.

Some children may feel guilty, even if it seems to us that there is no way they could be at fault. So be sure to reassure your child that this is not their fault.

They may also be worried about practicalities like who is picking them up from school etc, so again reassure your child and let them know what plans are in place. Attempt where you can to keep routines the same, unless you have a chat with your child and they decide they would rather take some time out. Stability and security is often found in the routines and everyday things that happen, when everything else feels very uncertain.

All in all – listen to your child, they will tell you in words or actions what they need, listen to your heart and instincts but if at all unsure please do talk to us here at the Hospice and we can try and help