

Adapted from Kidshelp.org

Here are some tips for talking to your child about loss. Remember that in our current climate with lockdowns, etc. responses may be heightened.

**When talking about death, use simple, clear words.** Be direct. Share facts. Speak at an age appropriate level.

**Listen and comfort.** Every child reacts differently to learning that someone has died. Some kids cry. Some ask questions. Others seem not to react at all. That's OK. Stay with your child to offer hugs or reassurance. Answer your child's questions or just be together for a few minutes.

**Put emotions into words.** Encourage kids to say what they're thinking and feeling in the days, weeks, and months following the loss. Talk about your own feelings: It helps kids be aware of and feel comfortable with theirs. Say things like, "I know you're feeling very sad. I'm sad, too."

**Respond to emotions with comfort and reassurance.** Notice if your child seems sad, worried, or upset in other ways. Ask about feelings and listen. Let your child know that it takes time to feel better after a loss. . Some kids may temporarily have trouble concentrating or sleeping, or have fears or worries. Reach out for support if you or your child are struggling.

**Help your child feel better.** Provide the comfort your child needs, but don't dwell on sad feelings. After a few minutes of talking and listening, shift to an activity or topic that helps your child feel a little better. Play, make art, cook, or go somewhere together.

**Give your child time to heal from the loss.** Grief is a process that happens over time. Be sure to have ongoing conversations to see how your child is feeling and doing. Healing doesn't mean forgetting. And remember, we are all living with collective loss due to the pandemic which will layer onto any other reactions your child/ren may have.

Perhaps most importantly - take care of yourself too.