



Child and Youth Services



PLEASE HELP YOURSELF TO THIS COPY

Welcome to our Monthly Newsletter

Learning about the death of a loved one can be hard enough for adults to absorb, now imagine if you are child or teen that has never experienced the death of someone close or know anything about death and grieving. As an adult, it can also be hard enough for us to process our grief without the added responsibility of having to help our children through it as well. This month we provide information to help you talk to your child about grief and learn ways to support your child through their grief.

Yours and Your Family's Mental Health Matters!

Stages of Grief

Dr. Krubler-Ross. *Joy of Sorrow*, Mar*co Products, Inc. 1991

Everyone goes through the following stages at their own pace. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. You may find yourself or one of your children at one stage, while your partner or other child is at another stage. This is normal. Accept the stage the individual is at and provide support to help them process their grief.

Denial-the initial loss can produce feels of shock and disbelief which try to protect us from the real impact of the situation. We often do not want to believe what has really happened.

Anger-When we can no longer deny the fact that our loved one is no longer with us, we can begin to feel anger and resentment. This anger can be directed at us, medical staff, and others.

Bargaining-This is our attempt to postpone the death. We often bargain with ourselves or God in secret as we attempt to see or have the loved one back with us.

Depression-feelings of loneliness, sadness, and guilt develop as we begin to process the reality that our loved one is no longer with us. We may also begin to cry more frequently.

Acceptance-acceptance is the culmination of the successful grieving. It is not viewed as a "happy" stage, rather it signifies our acceptance of the loss and have found some meaning from the loss.

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consists of Registered Social Workers, Psychologists and Nurses whom provide Individual, Family or Group counseling to Children, Youth and Parents within Sun Country Health Region. Speech-Language Pathology services (637-3646) are also available to infant, toddler, and preschool children within the region.

We provide counseling, assessment, education and support for a wide range of behavioural, emotional or developmental difficulties.

All services are confidential.

To access services, contact our Intake Worker at 1-800-216-7689 or 842-8665.

There is no fee for services.

How Children Grieve

Children (ages 6-8) may ask a lot of questions about the death and focus on all the details of the death. They may show regressive behaviors (bedwetting, baby talk) and experience nightmares and develop other fears. Children (ages 9-12) may begin to develop anxiety and general fears, while others may try to “play it cool” by minimizing their feelings by acting, joking or pretending as though nothing is wrong. Adolescents show their grief with a wide range of physical and emotional reactions. They may talk openly about the death, how it impacts them and how it impacts others. Teens will often prefer to confide in a get the support of their peers, but also be afraid to show their true feelings and reactions. Although at this stage, adolescents try to be more independent, with grief this is the opposite. They may become more dependent on their caregivers and supports and show some regressive behaviors.

Common Reactions:

Physical

Changes in appetite
Bowel and bladder changes
Decreases or increases in activities
Complaints of stomach aches and headaches

Feelings:

Numbness Hopelessness
Sadness Self-Blame
Anger Withdrawal
Fears/anxiety Helplessness

Behavior and Social:

Regressive behaviors (temper tantrums, bedwetting, thumb sucking)
Clinging, need for reassurance
Withdrawing/passivity
Aggressive behaviors (hitting, demanding)
Rebellious/defiant behaviors
“Perfect” child
Self-destructiveness/recklessness
Giddiness or joking that does not fit the situation

Tips to Talking to Your Children about Death

Taken from: M.Salmers 2002

- As soon as possible, set time aside to talk to your child. If you have more than one child, be aware of their developmental age. What you may tell one child may not be the same as what you tell your other child. You may choose to tell brief information to both children together or share the information with each of your children separately. If you cannot provide answers to your child’s questions, let them know you don’t know the answer but will find someone who might.
- Use correct language like “dead” and “die”. Don’t use phrases that suggest the individual is “sleeping” or “gone away” because it creates confusion that the person will come back.
- Use the given name of the deceased and talk openly about this individual as your child wants to. Don’t encourage your child to “move on” or “forget”.
- Explain your feelings to your child if you are upset. It allows them to understand your grief and reassure them that it’s okay for them to grieve too.
- Maintain structure and routine as best as possible for your child.
- Use photographs, discussions about special times, memory books to share in the grief process and as a way to say goodbye to your loved one
- Read about grief through books or articles to help you understand your child’s grief. If you are unsure what is normal grief for your child access professional help.

Possible Challenges and How to Work Through Them

Taken from: Victoria Hospice

There may be a number of challenges we face as we go through the grief process. It helps to be prepared and recognize possible dates, places or events that may trigger memories of your loved one. When this occurs, don’t try to ignore or push away those feelings or memories. Rather, learn to process the grief and move on.

Some challenges include, but may not be limited to:

Unpleasant Memories-our early focus tends to be on the unpleasant memories or events associated with the recent death of our loved one. Over time, we begin to recall pleasant memories we have of our loved one.

Certain Places or Rooms-we tend to avoid these areas as a way of protecting ourselves from additional stress related to the loss. Gradually over time, we need to face and return to these places.

Personal Effects-This is something that will be done in your own time. Some people choose to get others to help while others pack up the belongings and store them only to decide at a later date what to do with them.

Problem Solving Alone-When decisions are often made together with you and your loved one; their loss can shake your confidence in terms of your own decision making. As your confidence returns, you will find the strength to make independent decisions and may also find that you consult with others to assist with this. It is often best to avoid making major decisions, if possible, shortly after the death of your loved one.



Question of the Month

When my child learned about the death of her uncle she asked me if we would ever be a happy family again. I think she sees me crying all the time and doesn't know what to think? What can I tell her to make her feel better? When children go through grief and see their parents go through grief they begin to wonder if things will ever return to the way they were before the death. Although there is no easy answer, if your family learns to grieve together and support one another, happier times will occur again. Reassure her that everyone is grieving and may show this in different ways (crying, anger, sadness, withdrawal), but with time and through support the family will learn to return to activities it once used to do. Although you are grieving, it is still remember to try and keep your day structured and routine for the sake of your children. They need the consistency and reassurance that they will still be taken care of.

Recommended Books



The Saddest Time. By Norma Simon
Someone Special Died. by Joan Singleton Prestine
Sad Isn't Bad: A Good Grief Guidebook for Kids Dealing with Loss. By Michaelene Mundy
When Dinosaurs Die: A Guide to Understanding Death. By Laurie Krasny Brown and Marc Brown

Keeping Your Loved One's Memories Alive



Keeping your memories of your loved one is a special part of the grief process. There are several things you can do to help you remember and reflect on the special memories you have of this person. It helpful to captures these memories so when you are feeling sad, lonely or missing your special loved one you can go through these keepsakes. Some ideas include:

- Create a video/DVD of you talking about your special memories of this loved one
- Write down feel good messages that your loved one said to help you feel better
- Create a memory book-can be filled with photos, stories, drawings from your loved one
- Create a memory box-fill it with special items that remind you of your loved one
- Create a video/DVD of pictures of your loved one

My Body Doesn't Feel Good

When we are upset about a special person's death, sometimes our body will feel upset too (headaches, stomach aches, muscle pains, stiffness).

Draw or point to areas of your body that hurt. Come up with a plan as to what you can do to help your body feel better.

Some ideas include:

- *Naps talking bubble baths
- *Muscle stretches
- *Going for a walk
- *Playing at the park

- *Quiet time
- *Muscle rubs
- *Bike rides
- *Sporting activities

**Child & Youth Services
are also available at**

Arcola Mental Health

Arcola Health Centre
P.O. Box 419
Arcola SK S0C 0G0
Ph: (306)455-2159

Kipling Mental Health

Kipling Memorial Health Centre
Box 420
Kipling SK S0G 2S0
Ph: (306)736-2638

Weyburn Mental Health

Community Health Services
Building
P.O. Box 2003
Weyburn SK S4H 2Z9
Ph: (306) 842-8665 or
Toll Free 1-800-216-7689

**For more information
about Child & Youth
Services or to Access
Services call:**

**Intake
842-8665 or Toll Free at
1-800-216-7689**

**Find us on the
Internet!**

If you would like to view past
issues of the Child and Youth
Services Newsletter, look for
us on the Internet at
www.suncountry.sk.ca/

Upcoming Groups

*Family Justice Services offers the
Parenting After Separation and Divorce Program (For Parents)*

Estevan: June 25, 2011 9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m.

To register for this session call Toll Free 1-888-218-2822.

Registration is Mandatory. There is no fee for these sessions.

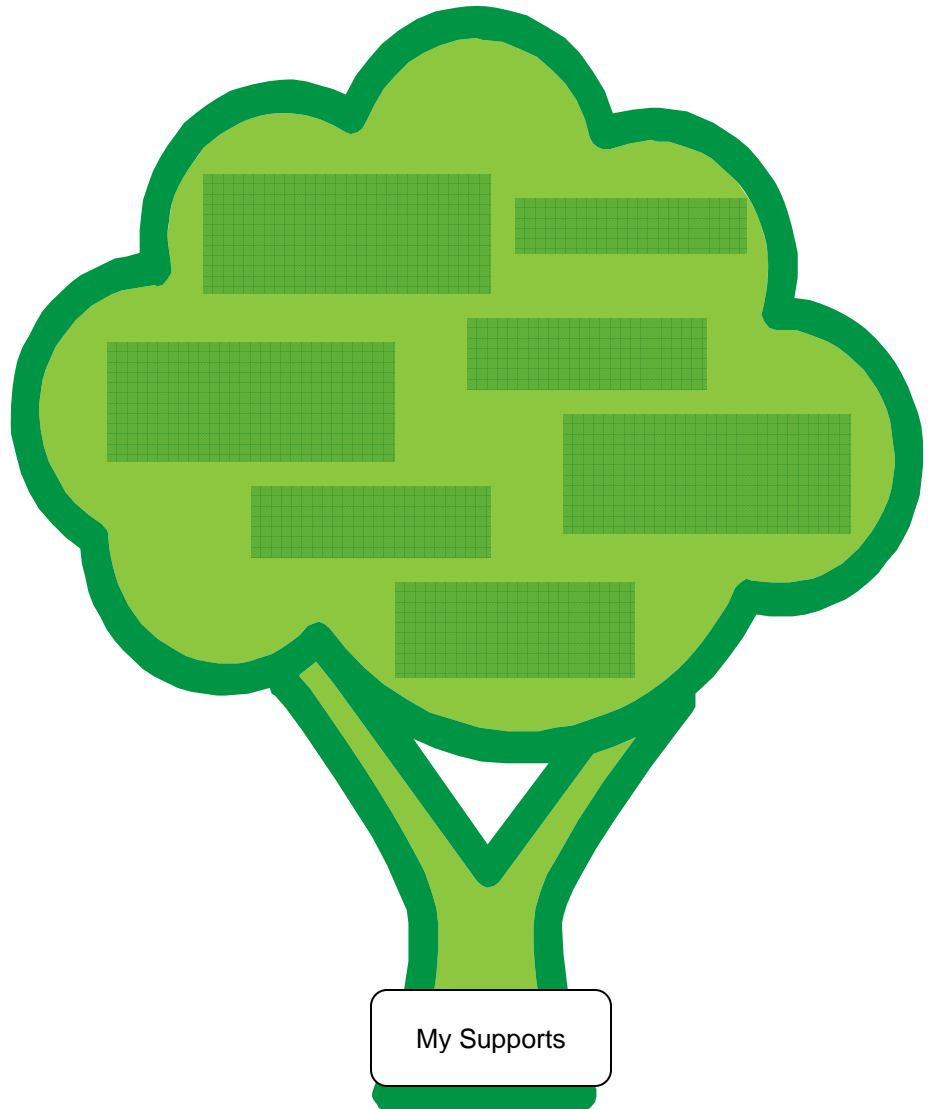
For more information call or go to

<http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/parental-education>

Telling Tree

Children can use a telling tree to list people in their lives that they feel comfortable talking to. This could be people from their school, parish, or family. Have your child write the names of people whom your child feels he/she can talk to in the shaded areas below. Cut out the tree and post it somewhere as a reminder to your child of their special supports.

Created by: Shannon Culy, Child & Youth Social Worker



Kids Help Phone
1-800-668-6868
www.KidsHelpPhone.ca

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kidshelpphone.ca