

Talking with Children about Grief and Loss

When families and communities experience a death or loss, it can be difficult to process our own emotions. For parents, it can also be difficult to support their children as they also navigate this challenging time.

Here are some recommendations for how parents may assist their child through tragic situations:

1. Your child may benefit greatly from age appropriate and honest dialogue regarding the events and will likely be open to strategies for addressing problems, anxieties and fears. Creating a feeling of adult support and normalcy, to the extent possible, is impactful to helping students deal with trauma.
2. If your child is more of an emotional type, he or she may benefit from opportunities to share their anxiety, fears, anger, sorrow and grief, which may be validated with or by adults. Be open and express genuine feelings and let them know that you are available to assist them.
3. If your child copes through social channels, your child may want to seek support and control through the structure of his or her relationships. Encourage connections and decrease isolation.
4. Children reared in faith may find solace in ceremonial practices and you may want to reach out to your faith community for support.
5. Sometimes children turn to their creativity as a means for coping with trauma. You should encourage this by supplying materials, resources, environment and encouragement necessary to support their efforts.
6. Physical activity may provide coping fulfillment for some children. You may utilize physical activity to divert their grief and allow them to process traumatic experiences in a nonthreatening format.

Please know that school personnel is always available to help. For more information about talking with your child about grief and loss, you might review the following resources from the National Association of School Psychologists.

[Addressing Grief](#)

[When Grief/Loss hits Close to Home: Tips for Caregivers](#)