

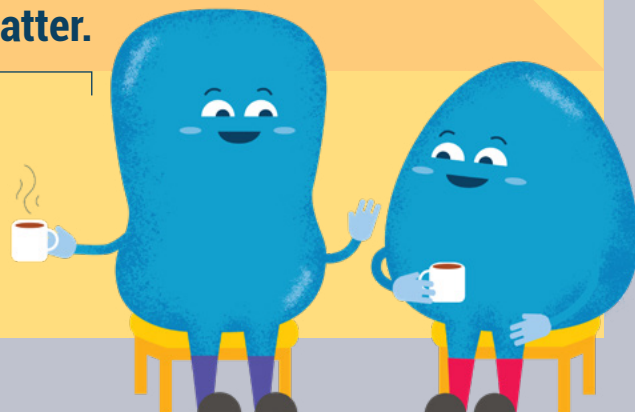
Covid-19 Parenting

**When someone we love dies.
Helping caregivers to support children.**

We are so sorry for your loss. Thank you for reading this. It shows that you care.

Looking after you helps your child: You matter.

- Get enough sleep and food.
- Take a few minutes each day to relax or have a break.
- Find one or two adults who can support you, listen, and talk.



Telling children. Be honest.

- Tell children that the person has died – sometimes they don't realise.
- Children can respond in very different ways: crying, shouting, not believing or going very quiet.
- All of these are OK. Tell them that you are there with them.
- Telling is a process, not an event. You may need to tell them again and again.
- Use words they understand.
- If they don't understand what death is, help explain that the person they love is not coming back. Try not to call it 'sleep' or 'a trip away'.
- Allow questions and talking. Be honest. It's OK to say when we don't know.

Children grieve in different ways.

- Grief can affect us for weeks or months or years. You don't have to feel better quickly.
- Children might be sad, angry, not understand or not believe it, feel numb, feel unwell or have pains, nightmares or problems at school. Children may seem happy, but still be sad. Children may behave as if they are much younger than they are for a while. These may not make sense to you, but all of these are normal.
- Children may feel like it was their fault – that they passed on the virus, or that they behaved badly. Tell them clearly that they did nothing wrong.
- If there is a support group that your child can be part of, this can help.
- If a child talks about wanting to hurt or kill themselves, ask for help from someone as soon as you can.
- Even babies and very young children need comfort from a familiar person. They need to feel secure, warm, fed and have attention. If you can keep some normal daily routines, this can be comforting for children.
- It can help for children to be part of rituals around death - to choose a song or something to say.

UNICEF Caring for the Caregiver Team (2020) Caring for Caregivers during the COVID-19 Crisis | Sources: Thurman, T. R., B. G. Luckett, J. Nice, A. Spyrellis and T. M. Taylor (2017). "Effect of a bereavement support group on female adolescents' psychological health: a randomised controlled trial in South Africa." *Lancet Glob Health* 5(6): e604-e614. | Sherr, L, Cluver, L, Tomlinson, M, Idele, P, Banati, P, Anthony, D, Roberts, K, Haag, K and Hunt, X (2021). Mind Matters: Lessons from past crises for child and adolescent mental health during COVID-19, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, 2021. | MHPSS Collaborative: WHO-supported guidance for communicating with children about death, and helping them cope with grief: | Rapa, E., L. Dalton and A. Stein (2020). "Talking to children about illness and death of a loved one during the COVID-19 pandemic." *Lancet Child Adolesc Health* 4(8): 560-562. | Dorsey, S., L. Lucid, P. Martin, K. M. King, K. O'Donnell, L. K. Murray, A. I. Wasonga, D. K. Itemba, J. A. Cohen, R. Manongi and K. Whetten (2020). "Effectiveness of Task-Shifted Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Children Who Experienced Parental Death and Posttraumatic Stress in Kenya and Tanzania: A Randomized Clinical Trial." *JAMA Psychiatry* 77(5): 464-473. | Kentor, R. A. and J. B. Kaplow (2020). "Supporting children and adolescents following parental bereavement: guidance for health-care professionals." *Lancet Child Adolesc Health* 4(12): 889-898.

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Covid-19 Parenting

**When someone we love dies.
Support for parents and caregivers.**

We are so sorry that you are going through this. You are not alone.

Be kind to yourself – you matter.

- > Take some time each day for you, to breathe or sit with someone you trust.
- > Make a list of things that make you feel better, and do them.
- > Get enough sleep and food - it is hard to care for children when you are tired and hungry.
- > It's OK to cry. Never blame yourself, this is not your fault.



Practical things you may need

- > Ask someone you trust for help – food or childcare can be useful.
- > You may need documents for inheritance, for children, or to access services
- > Find out about your rights – sometimes people try to take money or inheritance from a grieving person.

Find a group or a person to talk to

- > Talking with someone who can support you and listen to you can help.
- > It can help to join a group of people who have also lost someone.
- > Nobody is perfect. It's OK to talk about good and bad memories.
- > There is always hope even after loss. Try to enjoy simple things, and take a minute to play with your child.

Grieving in your own way

- > We all grieve in our own ways, from shouting to crying to anger to feeling very sad. It can feel different each day. Sometimes we feel better, then worse again. Whatever you feel, it is OK.
- > It can help to take part in any mourning or cultural rituals that feel helpful, or to think about bonds and connections with the person you have lost.

Be proud of yourself. We are proud of you.

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Covid-19 Parenting

When someone we love dies. Families helping each other.

These three ways to support each other cost nothing, and take only a few minutes each day

Relaxing helps coping

- > Try to do one simple thing to relax each day with your child or teenager, and also for yourself.
- > It can also help to use this when you are upset or angry.

**Sit down comfortably,
close your eyes**

**Listen to your breath as it goes in
and out for a minute**

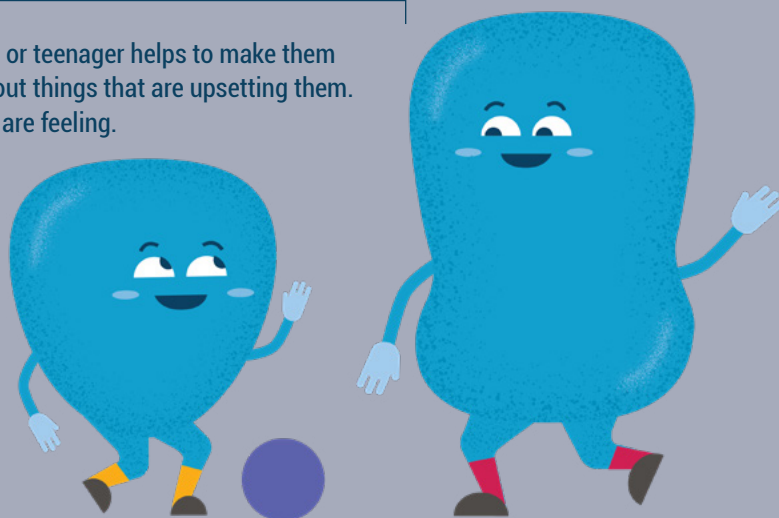
When you are ready, open your eyes.

Giving chances to say goodbye

- > Families, children and parents are not perfect. When someone has died, it's OK to talk about the good and bad things we remember.
- > It can help to write a letter or make a drawing for the person who has gone.
- > Some people hold a ceremony or have a special meal to celebrate the person, and say goodbye.
- > It can help to make a box of memories, to put things that remind them of the person.
- > It can help just to talk about the person when you think about them.
- > Do what feels OK for you and your child.

One on one time

- > Spending just a few minutes every day focused on your child or teenager helps to make them feel more secure, and gives them a chance to play or talk about things that are upsetting them. You can also use bedtime as a chance to ask them how they are feeling.
- > **DAY – try to do it every day.**
Find 5 minutes (or more) each day
- > **PLAY - Let your child choose.**
Tell them that you would like to spend some time with them and that they can choose what to play, do or talk about.
- > **STAY - Focus on your child.**
Put aside things that distract you. Look at your child. Accept what they say or want to do without judging them.



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