

# PATHWAYS CENTER *for* GRIEF & LOSS

## **SUPPORT AFTER A CORONAVIRUS DEATH: SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS**

From the moment of death forward, its ripple effects can be surprisingly far-reaching. The closer the relationship, the greater the impact it will have. The inability to say goodbye, to be with the person, or to have a 'normal' funeral are all ways this loss is far different from any previous loss. And all of these differences need to be explained to children and teens. The best way adults can help children is to have open, honest discussions and encourage them to express their feelings, worries and questions.

- Maintain routines to foster a sense of security and reassurance.
- Identify a time or place during your child's daily routine to talk.
- Consider the age of your child and where he or she is developmentally.
- Provide simple answers, short descriptions, and listen for their questions.
- Particularly with younger children, be prepared to hear the same questions over and over. They are trying to grasp and understand what this is all about.
- Avoid nonessential separations at this time; it can increase apprehension and distress.
- Maintain discipline and whatever family rules you usually have.
- Even teens, despite their need for independence, need reassurance and a sense of safety.
- Know children and teens will be highly anxious and worry who else might die. Be careful not to provide false reassurances but instead remind them of how careful everyone is being.

In the many different ways you support your child and help them know they can come to you with their questions and concerns, you are helping them cope with a difficult experience. Know too that you as an adult are also stressed and affected. It is physically and emotionally exhausting. Take care of yourself and obtain the support you need too. If you would like more information or support, call Hospice and Community Care's Pathways Center for Grief & Loss, (717) 391-2413 or (800) 942-7610.



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