

How to help a child through a bereavement

1. Encourage the children to recognise that their feelings are normal. Show your sadness – this helps them understand that it is Ok to show their sadness too. Try not to be taken aback by their comments or reactions.
2. Support children to enable them to talk about their loss and express their feelings. However, do not force them to talk but answer questions simply and honestly. Children won't always want to talk. They will when they are ready. Doing an activity while you talk can help this.
3. Use the correct words – death, die, died, dead. Young children can become confused and frightened if phrases such as 'gone to sleep' 'gone on a journey' are used. Children have a surprising capacity to deal with the truth if information is given in simple straightforward language. Sometimes, just listening is enough.
4. Keep up routines as much as possible (although this is difficult at the present time)
5. Activities to do could include:
 - Making a memory box – collect special things together that remind you of the special person.
 - Make a memory book of photographs, letters, poems, pictures etc.
 - Make something with some material of an item of clothing.
 - Make a memory jar



1. Fill your jar to the brim with salt. On one of the pieces of paper write down 5 things you remember about your loved one. These could be things you know they liked – such as a football team, something they enjoyed doing, somewhere you went together or something you remember about that person. The memories don't all have to be positive, it's important to acknowledge and grieve all aspects of your relationship with the person who has died.
2. Now you've chosen your 5 memories chose a different colour pastel or chalk to represent each one. Spread out the 5 sheets of paper and divide the salt from your jar between them.
3. Colour each pile of salt using one of your chosen chalks/pastels. Simply rub the pastel backwards and forwards over the pile of salt. The salt will then begin to take on the colour of the chalk – the harder you rub the brighter the coloured salt will be.
4. Carefully pick up each piece of paper and pour the coloured salts into your jar one at a time. If you tilt your jar you can make waves of colour and other patterns.
5. When all the colours have been added, hold the jar and tap it down on a work surface to settle the salt. Do not shake the jar unless you want to mix up all the colours. Then fill any remaining space with plain salt right up to the brim. This is important as it will prevent the colours mixing.
6. Place a piece of cotton wool in the lid of the jar, this helps to keep the salt in place. Secure the lid firmly. (You can tape it down with sticky or washi tape to make it more secure).
7. You can either keep your list of memories close to your jar or you can put them in another jar to keep them safe and add to over time.
8. Put your jar somewhere you will see it often and keep your memory sheet safe so you can show it to friends and family.