



Coronavirus

Strategies for Primary School Children with Bereavement & Loss

Children, their families and school staff are likely to have experienced bereavement and loss due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The death of someone can be an extremely difficult and distressing experience for both adults and children. It can have a significant impact on the school community in different ways.

This leaflet supplements the *'Bereavement & Loss Support for Schools'* leaflet.

It is aimed at primary school staff. It contains a range of strategies and activities to be used to support primary school children with loss and bereavement. It contains a range of activities that can be used with individual children, small groups and whole classes

Memory Box

Talk of coronavirus and death can be very distressing for anyone dealing with a bereavement. It's important to continue talking about the loved one who has died – maybe



share memories that make you laugh. Perhaps you could make a memory box with your pupils.



Reference: Winston's Wish

Co-memorating Meetings

This is a space to re-member together, share stories and thoughts when a child has died. The EPS can support facilitation of these meetings.

These meetings involve sharing stories and memories of the person who has died. It is a joint process of creating new meanings in relation to the person who has died. This meeting creates an opportunity for all the staff to participant in remembering their life and relationships.

Reference: Death Talk by Glenda Fredman

Whole School Assembly

A special whole school assembly could be useful to bring the school together to acknowledge what has happened and remember the person who had died. It will



provide an opportunity to normalise and share grief. Consider whether this could be done virtually following the school's relevant policies.

Memory Stones

This activity helps children to speak honestly about their feelings and memories.

Use a rough, rocky pebble to explain that there might be some difficult feelings or memories that the children have around the person's death. Use a smooth stone to talk about ordinary, everyday memories that the children might have of the person who has died. Use a shiny gemstone to talk about the great memories they have of the person who has died. All three stones are important and can be held together as the memories can be held in mind together.

Reference: Winston's Wish



Memorial

Many bereaved people may be in isolation and unable to attend funerals. Funeral services are likely to be delayed and shortened, this can be very distressing.



It may not be possible to hold a memorial service at the school due to Covid-19 restrictions. It could be helpful to provide a virtual space for positive comments and messages. This needs careful planning and thought. Consider the following:

- Who will manage and monitor the virtual space?
- Who will have access?
- How long will the space be active for?
- How will you communicate to pupils and families about the space?
- What happens to the information?

It is important that any memorial is planned in accordance with the wishes of the family and that they are closely involved.



Staff Debrief Groups

Discussions about grief and loss can stir up difficult thoughts and feelings. It can be useful to meet with a colleague to talk through them

on a regular basis. These are some things to consider when setting up a debriefing group:

- Consider the location of the group and ensure that it is a private space.
- Book a regular protected time slot.
- Consider the group membership.
- Consider who will facilitate the group.

Useful Resources

Bereavement websites

<https://www.winstonswish.org/>

<http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/>

<https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/coronavirus-dealing-bereavement-and-grief>

<https://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org/>

Managing anxiety

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=so8QN9an3t8>

<https://www.calm.com/blog/take-a-deep-breath>

<https://www.calm.com>

<https://www.smilingmind.com>

Books

To read together

The Day the Sea Went Out and Never Came Back. Margot Sunderland and Nicky Armstrong. (Therapeutic story).
Someone Has Died Suddenly. Mary Williams. (www.suddendeath.org)
Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine. (Activity book) Diana Crossley

For younger children

Goodbye Mousie. Robie H.Harris
When Uncle Bob Died. Althea
Dear Grandma Bunny. Dick Bruna
Are You Sad, Little Bear? A Book about Learning To Say Goodbye. Rachel Rivett

For older children;

Flamingo Dream. Donna Jo Napoli
Fred. Posy Simmonds
Granpa. John Burningham

Who can I talk to?

Contact your school's Educational Psychologist for advice and support

edpsychology@octavopartnership.org

