

A charter for bereaved children and young people

(Adapted for those in isolation)



“A child can live through anything provided they are told the truth and allowed to share the natural feelings people have when they are suffering” Eda Le Shan.

Although each bereavement will be unique, bereaved children and young people have key needs:

1. Enough Information

Bereaved children/young people need answers to their questions. They need information that clearly explains what has happened, why it happened and what will happen now. Keep talking to them and listen to what they are saying. Try to answer the question they have asked rather than overloading them with ‘too much’ information. If you don’t know the answers, that’s ok. Be honest about it and come back to it when you do know.

2. Being Involved

Bereaved children/young people should be asked if they want to help with important decisions that will affect them (such as planning the funeral, remembering anniversaries). Acknowledge that we are in extraordinary times and give lots of extra reassurance. They may not be able to attend the funeral at the moment but they can still be involved. Follow the order of service at home, draw a picture or write a letter, video call with others who are also grieving and tell stories about your loved one.

3. Telling the Story

Bereaved children/young people have the right to tell their story. This may be through drawings, letters, craft activities or through play such as using puppets. The stories can be heard, read and seen by people important to the child/young person.

4. Expressing Feelings

Bereaved children/young people should feel comfortable showing all feelings that go with grief such as anger, sadness, guilt and anxiety. They may need help to find ways to do this.

5. Routines

Bereaved children/young people should continue with interests and activities they have enjoyed if they choose and if that is possible. We know normal routines, in many cases, can’t happen at the moment but we can establish new routines that still allow us to connect with our friends and family. Now, more than ever, it is important to maintain routines, remember it is ok to still have fun and look after yourself!

6. Remembering

Bereaved children/young people have the right to remember the person who died, if they chose to and when they are ready to. This may involve reliving or sharing memories so that the person becomes a part of the child’s/young person’s ongoing life story. They may like support to make a memory box.

7. Time alone

Remember it is important for all of us to have space sometimes. Try and establish a place where you can go to have some time alone if you need it. There are also some great apps out there such as Calm that can give you time to breathe.

8. News

Try to limit direct access to news and news feeds as these can be overwhelming and add to the feeling of anxiety. Maybe nominate someone in the house who can filter and share information that has been accessed from a reliable source.

9. Oxygen Mask

Remember, you can’t look after your children if you aren’t looking after yourself. Our helpline is available if you need a chat, 023 8064 7550 or email us info@simonsays.org.uk.