



Bereavement Checklist & Mental Health Contact Numbers

During times of tragedy, it is important to take care of yourself and assess the needs of your family members. This information sheet provides parents and guardians with a bereavement checklist and mental health contact numbers, should you or your family members need additional mental health support.

A Bereavement Checklist for Parents and Guardians

- **Set aside special times to be with your child.** He or she may be feeling lonely and afraid. Listen carefully to both verbal and body language. If your child acts unconcerned, it may be because he or she is having difficulty handling the strong feelings of grief.
- **Allow all feelings.** It's natural for your child to be upset and behave differently after the death of someone special. There are no "wrong" feelings, but there is unacceptable behavior.
- **Use concepts and terms the child can understand.** The child's concept of death may be very different than yours. The idea of a natural flow of life and death is hard for the preschooler.
- **Involve the child in your family grieving process.** Don't try to "protect" the child by hiding the reality of physical death.
- **Talk honestly.** Children are curious about death and want the truth. It is OK for children to see adults showing emotion.
- **Emphasize that death is not like sleep.** Children often worry that they will not wake up.
- **Emphasize that physical death is final.** This may be difficult for your child to understand.
- **Emphasize that death is not a punishment.** Neither the child nor the deceased is being punished.
- **Provide security.** Children often worry that another caregiver will also die. The child should know that there is someone to care for him or her.
- **Assure your child that he or she is not the cause.** Your child may feel that he or she was the reason the person died.
- **Guard against carrying the stress of death over into your relationship with your child.** Small problems often seem magnified.
- **Allow time for healing.** It takes time to process grief. Seek help for yourself. Adults often need as much or more support than children do.

Mental Health Support Contact Numbers:

If your child or family is looking for mental health support, please call North Marin Community Services for a confidential phone assessment: (415) 892-1643, ext 239 (Se habla Español). All services are offered Monday-Friday, 10am-8pm, by appointment. Counseling services are available at NMCS's main facility (680 Wilson Avenue) and at the Novato Teen Clinic (6090 Redwood Blvd). Counseling Services are available in English and Spanish, provided by licensed Marriage & Family Therapists (MFT), and Post Master MFT interns and trainees. Affordable \$30 per session fee. Visit www.northmarincs.org for further information

If you or a family member has an **immediate mental health crisis**, please call **Psychiatric Emergency**: (415) 499-6666. Find more programs in the Bay Area. Call 211 or (800) 273-6222 for free, confidential service in over 150 languages. Thank you.