

Talking to your child about suicide

Talking to a child about the death of a parent, sibling, close relative, or friend can be very difficult. You want to protect a child from distress. However, children need to be told about death. It helps the child understand what has happened and what it means for them. It is best to be open and honest about what has happened as this helps avoid misunderstandings about suicide which can affect children later.

Children will have a different understanding of death depending on their age, so it can be helpful to check with them about what their understanding of death is.



The following steps will help when talking to a child or young person about the person who has died.

- Tell the child clearly what has happened; it is best if the child is told by a parent, a relative, or a person the child knows and trusts
- Use clear language, which the child understands
- Give simple details about how the person died
- Acknowledge the child's feelings, and ask questions
- Reassure the child that they are loved and nothing they did caused the person's death
- Maintain the child's routine as much as possible

These tips can help you to support a child or young person at different ages and stages

0-5 YEARS

Maintain routine, encouraging them to ask questions, and answering them openly and simply

5-8 YEARS

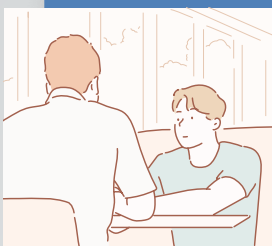
Encourage them to talk about and express their feelings, no matter what those feelings are

8-12 YEARS

Reassure them about changes in lifestyle, such as household income and the family home

ADOLESCENTS

Involve teenagers in rituals (memory books/videos) and be willing and able to listen to them, accept their feelings as real and important, and model openness in discussing issues of death and grief



If you need extra support please contact: **Turas Le Cheile**
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