

# AFTER A LOSS

How to support children as they navigate through the grief process



## HOW TO TALK ABOUT GRIEF

What to say and not to say...

Many people believe that talking about death and loss will make those who are grieving more sad, so they avoid starting those conversations. However, encouraging children to talk about their grief will help them process what has happened, and help them recover.

- DO:**
- ▶ Initiate the conversation by expressing concern and letting the child know that you are there for them
  - ▶ Listen more and talk less. Personal sharing is not necessarily helpful and may make the child feel that your concern is not genuine. Your job is not to cheer them up, it is to support them.
  - ▶ Offer practical advice (i.e. how to respond to questions or ask for help) and offer reassurance without minimizing their concerns.
  - ▶ Maintain contact with the child and let them know that over time you will still be available to listen to and support them.

### TRY TO AVOID SAYING THINGS LIKE:

- ▶ "I know exactly what you're going through"
- ▶ "You must be so (insert emotion here - angry, sad, confused)"
- ▶ "I know this is hard, but you have to remember all of the good things you have in your life"
- ▶ "You need to be strong and to control your emotions"

We should try to remember that everyone experiences grief differently, and we cannot tell others what they are or should be feeling. They need to experience whatever emotions they feel and need to believe they are supported and feel safe to express their emotions.

## RESOURCES

Lifeways Crisis Line:  
866-343-4473

Lifeways General Access:  
541-922-6226

National Suicide Prevention  
Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK  
(1-800-273-8255)

Vange John Memorial  
Hospice: 541-667-3543

Cork's Place: 509-783-7416

[www.WebHealing.com](http://www.WebHealing.com)

[www.WillowGreen.com](http://www.WillowGreen.com)

[www.GriefNet.org](http://www.GriefNet.org)



Lifeways Inc.  
595 NW 11th St.  
Hermiston, OR 97838

Vange John Memorial Hospice  
645 W. Orchard Ave. Suite 300  
Hermiston, OR 97838

Cork's Place (Bereavement Center)  
712 W. 19th Ave  
Kennewick, WA 99336