



CHILDREN AND GRIEF

If someone close to you has died, this may be an important time to consider the children in your family or acquaintance who may also be affected by the loss. Children have different ways of grieving than adults, and may struggle with their feelings of grief in less than obvious ways. They may appear to misbehave or disobey, or they may become more “controlling” or overly concerned about the well-being of surviving adults in their lives, rather than expressing grief directly with tears and words.

The loss of a parent frequently causes children distress that they are not developmentally able to handle. The surviving parent or other caregiver is faced with his or her own grief as well as the child’s needs. The loss of a sibling may raise feelings of personal vulnerability, survivor guilt, or other complex emotions.

Adolescents have the need to process grief with friends their own age, but may

not have friends who are able to talk about loss.

Children work through their grief in stages, as they are able to develop different levels of the understanding of death. Both the child’s age and the meaning of the lost relationship to them need to be considered. Children may also be very resilient, and able to feel supported by other caring adults in their life.

If a child in your family (or with whom you are acquainted) has lost a significant relationship and needs support, Hospice of Spokane offers “Connections,” a special group for parents and kids, as well as a summer grief camp for children. There is no charge for these groups and they are open to everyone in our community. Individual or family grief counseling is also available to the community-at-large.

Hospice of Spokane offers bereavement resources at no charge to our community. Gathering with others who are journeying through grief is comforting and informative for many people. Our grief support groups focus on several types of grief and are available throughout the week. Special programs for bereaved children and parents are also offered at no cost. Individual counseling is available on a sliding fee basis.
