



CENTRE DE COUNSELLING FAMILIAL DE TIMMINS

TIMMINS FAMILY COUNSELLING CENTRE

60 Wilson Avenue, Suite 310 Timmins, Ontario P4N 2S7

Telephone (705) 267-7333 - Fax (705) 268-6850

HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH GRIEF

Allow children to be the teachers about their grief experiences: Give children the opportunity to tell their story and be a good listener.

Grieving is a process, not an event: Parents and schools need to allow adequate time for each child to grieve in the manner that works for that child. Pressing children to resume “normal” activities without the chance to deal with their emotional pain may prompt additional problems or negative reactions.

Don't lie or tell half-truths to children about the tragic event: Children are often bright and sensitive. They will see through false information and wonder why you do not trust them with the truth. Lies do not help the child through the healing process or help develop effective coping strategies for life's future tragedies or losses.

Help all children, regardless of age, to understand loss and death: Give the child information at the level that he/she can understand. Allow the child to guide adults as to the need for more information or clarification of the information presented. Loss and death are both part of the cycle of life that children need to understand.

Encourage children to ask questions about loss and death: Adults need to be less anxious about not knowing all the answers. Treat questions with respect and a willingness to help the child find his or her own answers.

Don't assume that children always grieve in an orderly or predictable way: We all grieve in different ways and there is no one “correct” way for people to move through the grieving process.

Let children know that you really want to understand what they are feeling or what they need: Sometimes children are upset but they cannot tell you what will be helpful. Giving them the time and encouragement to share their feelings with you may enable them to sort out their feelings.

Children will need long-lasting support: The more losses the child or adolescent suffers, the more difficult it will be to recover. This is especially true if they have lost a parent who was their major source of support. Try to develop multiple supports for children who suffer significant losses.

Keep in mind that grief work is hard: It is hard work for adults and hard for children as well.

Understand that grief work is complicated: Deaths that result from a terrorist act or war can bring forth many issues that are difficult, if not impossible, to comprehend. Grieving may also be complicated by a need for vengeance or justice and by the lack of resolution of the current situation: the conflict may continue and the nation may still feel at risk. The sudden or violent nature of the death or the fact that some individuals may be considered missing rather than dead can further complicate the grieving process.

Be aware of your own need to grieve: Focusing on the children in your care is important, but not at the expense of your emotional needs. Adults who have lost a loved one will be far more able to help children work through their grief if they get help themselves. For some families, it may be important to seek family grief counseling, as well as individual sources of support.

Do you need more help?

Don't be afraid to reach out for more help. If you're not sure who to talk to, consider calling **Timmins Family Counselling Centre** to learn more about grief and if counselling is right for you.

You can reach us at **705-267-7333**.

You can also visit our website at www.timminsfamilycounselling.com.