



forEVERMORE Advancing Bereavement Care For All
DIGITAL SUMMIT: Thursday, November 19th at 2pm EST

A GUIDE TO WATCHING FOR FAMILIES

***A national conversation on how the death of a loved one impacts us all.
Personal stories, hard facts, solace in song and hope for the future.***

Explaining the Summit to Children and Teens:

Evermore is holding an online event for people who want to learn more about how families can be helped after the death of a special person in their lives. Speakers will include people from the arts, education, government and nonprofit organizations. They will share stories, songs and what they have learned about bereaved families and how we can help them.

Explaining Grief and Bereavement to Children and Adolescents.

Grief is how we react when someone we love dies. While all people experience grief at some point in their lives, it is different for each person. Grief is not one single emotion but affects the way we feel, think, interact with other people, even the way our bodies feel. Some grief responses are familiar (sadness, anger, loneliness) but when we think about the collection of all grief reactions, it can be strange and confusing.

Bereavement refers to the period of time following the death of someone in our lives. There is no set ending point.

Prepare children and teens for the digital event. Children under 7 years may not understand all that they hear. Older children and teens may react in different ways, with anxiety, worry or great interest.

Beginning the conversation:

- Children and adolescents need to have factual information.
- Focus on the helpers, the people in our communities, religious leaders, government leaders and health care providers who assist families who have lost a loved one.

Watch the Evermore Summit Together

- Children and teens should watch with caring adults, family members, and good friends.
 - Observe children's reactions (tearfulness, fidgeting, crying, very quiet or even "silly" remarks or behaviors).
 - These may be signs that a child is experiencing fears or anxieties, stomach distress, crying, or worrying.
 - Try not to ask, "Are you okay?" or "Are you upset?"
 - Instead point out the behavior you have noticed and ask what he/she is thinking or feeling, "I see you are kind of quiet, tell me what you're thinking?"
 - Talk and Share with each other. Keep the conversation going. Don't let children/teens go to bed without having a chance to talk.
 - Share personal thoughts and feelings. Don't hesitate to "open" communication with your own reactions.
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- Acknowledge children's/teen's feelings. Recognize, accept and respect a child's feelings.

Understanding Advocacy and Helping Others

- Taking action ignites a moment of transformation – a sense of accomplishment, that transcends a sense of helplessness to that of empowerment. Young people learn how to cope with stress, feel empowered, develop a sense of purpose and identity, build relationships with others-peers and adult allies.
- Young people often feel empowered when they take part in civic activities, especially with their peers. They gain more control over their lives, which enhances their social resilience and improves mental wellbeing.
- Promote and practice empathy. All over the world, in the wake of tragedy communities come together to help, to heal, and to learn from each other.
- Empathy is the foundation of this human response. The understanding and caring about another person's condition is key to inspiring compassion and ultimately taking action. What can a child do to help someone who is sick? How can a young child help a family who has lost their home in a flood? What can children do to help the hungry? How can children provide comfort to those who are sad or grieving?

Middle School Talking Points and Sensible Strategies

- Provide age-appropriate, accurate information.
- Listen to their fears and concerns, questions and ideas. Be honest and share with them as much information as they are developmentally able to handle.
- Be prepared to keep listening. If they have more questions, they can bring them up.
- Allow them to feel empowered. Reinforce the point that they are not too young to learn the importance of helping others.

High School Talking Points and Sensible Strategies

Note: See suggestions for Middle School Students as well.

- Older children and teens may have been exposed to more traumas and losses than younger children—from very public tragedies in the national spotlight to very private experiences within their families.
- Remember that many are feeling the pain of loss, emotions will be “close to the surface.” Support each other.
 - Empathy, courage, compassion and sympathy will emerge as themes, help
 - Correct any misinformation and encourage and facilitate expression of feelings but also let students know that it is okay if they don’t want to talk at that moment.
- Focus on those who help: first responders, parents, community members, clergy, etc. Young people need to know that there are many resources that can help individuals and families who are grieving.

If you would like to become involved or have someone from Evermore present to your class or group, please contact carole@live-evermore.org.