FOR PARENTS, CAREGIVERS AND TEACHERS

Guiding Light

Grief is a natural response to loss. For children, it may happen when someone dies or when something important in their world changes: moving, divorce, separation, changing schools, losing a pet, or missing someone they love. Because children may not have the words, grief can show up as sadness, worry, anger, quietness, clinginess, tiredness, stomach aches, trouble focusing or changes in behaviour.

How you can help

1. **Create a safe space** for conversations about feelings and memories.
2. **Offer comfort** through faith, love and reassurance that they are not alone.
3. **Encourage expression** through journaling and drawing, and join in.
4. **Teach coping skills** such as breathing and gratitude, and model them.
5. **Support new beginnings:** healing is a journey, not forgetting.

Gentle activities

- Draw or paint what “sad”, “happy” or “hopeful” looks like
- Keep a journal
- Play: puppets, blocks, role-play, outdoor games
- Storytelling and guided imagery (“warm light”, “safe hands”)
- Breathing: in 4, hold 2, out 4, hold 2
- Affirmations: “I am loved.” “I am strong.”
- Music and movement
- Time with pets
- Nature: plant a flower, decorate memory stones

When should I be concerned?

If grief is seriously affecting daily life, such as difficulty getting out of bed, deep sadness, missing school, no longer enjoying favourite activities or withdrawing from loved ones, seek support from a paediatrician, school counsellor or child psychologist. Any talk of wanting to die needs help the same day.

Help in Jamaica

SafeSpot – Jamaica’s National Child & Teen Helpline: 888-723-3776 (888-SAFE-SPOT) · WhatsApp 876-439-5199 · info@safespotja.com

MOHW Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Helpline: 888-639-5433 (888-NEW-LIFE)

Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services / Child Guidance Clinics: referral via 888-639-5433

Emergency: 119 police · 110 fire and ambulance

This guide supports emotional expression and connection. It is not a substitute for professional mental-health care, diagnosis or therapy.