

Suggestions for Helping Children

Children have the same emotional needs after the suicide of a loved one as adults, but often their hurts are not taken seriously. Many times adults have their hands full of grief and do not think to reach out to the children. Here are some ideas.

1. It is important to be honest with your children. Give the correct information in a loving, compassionate way.
2. The explanation should be clear and direct. Be careful not to over explain.
3. Listen carefully. Answer their questions truthfully and be honest in telling the truth about the suicide.
4. Talk about the deceased family member.
5. Discuss better ways than suicide to handle problems.
6. Tell all your children - even the younger ones.
7. Encourage children to share their grief with those at home and with trusted persons outside the family.
8. You can help your children grieve by letting them see your tears, by crying with them, and by letting them know that it's okay to be upset.
9. Have a positive attitude toward your children.
10. Be aware of your children's possible feelings of guilt. Assure them that it wasn't their fault.
11. Children need to know that suicide is an individual matter. Even if family members do it, they can still choose not to.
12. Children may experience all the many emotions and phases of grief.
13. Teach your children to be selective about to whom they tell the story of suicide.

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