

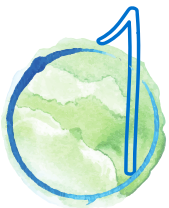
JUDI'S HOUSE

Pathfinders

Caregiving Skills



The death of someone important creates stress for children and caregivers. It is not uncommon for children to struggle with rules and self-control. This is complicated as caregivers are facing their own grief while trying to bring their household together. Judi's House experts compiled decades of knowledge and wisdom shared by caregivers in our bereavement care programs into skills that offer guidance and strategies to help you in establishing your own style in supporting a grieving child.



Self-care

Caregivers of grieving children tend to be so focused on taking care of everyone else that they forget to care for themselves. This can lead to feeling emotionally drained and overwhelmed. By taking time to care for yourself, you end up with the energy to create a more loving, nurturing environment for your family.



Reflective Listening

A simple shift in the way you listen can help children feel heard and relieves the pressure of feeling like you must have the "right answers." Reflective listening is repeating back to your child what you believe they are saying, thinking, or feeling. This will give children the opportunity to clarify confusion or misunderstandings.



Discipline a Grieving Child

Caregivers often question disciplining a grieving child. Appropriate use of discipline is not just okay, it is what grieving children need. They may feel that their world is no longer a safe, predictable place. Testing limits is one way of managing those emotions. Caregivers can help by reestablishing rules and communicating clear limits with warmth, love, and consistency.



Grow Your Relationship Through Praise

As a grieving caregiver, daily stressors such as waking up late or getting stuck in traffic are amplified. Despite these and other pressures, intentionally noticing children's positive behaviors can lift your mood and strengthen your relationship. Try recognizing praiseworthy behaviors such as brushing their teeth, completing their homework, or cleaning up.



Create Consistent Routines

Many families share that finding a rhythm after the death is difficult. Whether routines existed before or are just being established, regular daily activities and schedules (chores, play time, bedtime) help children know what to expect. Although it may be challenging, structure and consistency are essential components in supporting children's healing.



Take a Time Out

Increased meltdowns and tantrums are common with grieving children. When kids experience higher stress levels, accessing the part of their brain that helps them think, problem-solve, plan, and reason can be difficult. If you find yourself engaged in a power struggle, take a few minutes, and give yourself and your child a chance to calm down and breathe.



Support Healthy Boundaries

It is important to distinguish between "kid-size" worries and "adult-size" worries. When caregivers are grieving and feel overwhelmed and isolated, we may unintentionally share some of our "adult-size" worries with children. Although open communication is important, there are times, when kids need to be kids.



Increase Positive Communication

Many roadblocks prevent positive communication after the death of an important person. Family members react to the death differently and may try to protect each other from their own thoughts and feelings. There may be a shift in family roles. In this technology age, a lot can distract us from genuine relationships with each other. Families benefit from focus on making everyday events meaningful and carving out time each day to stop and listen.



Create New Family Memories

When a family is experiencing grief and stress, it is easy to forget the importance of time spent together engaging in family activities and creating new memories. Spending quality time together as a family does not have to be a major endeavor. Picnics in the park or playing board games at home are valuable ways to foster a sense of closeness and hope for your family.

