

Strategies for parents/guardians to support children through times of grief

- **Be yourself** – Demonstrate your natural concern calmly and in your own words.
- **Be available** – Spend time with your child. Attempt to distract your child by reading, walking, going to a movie, etc.
- **Listen** – Let your child express his/her thoughts, concerns, feelings, and perceptions in a non-judgmental, emotionally safe environment.
- **Explain** – Talk about what you know in short, truthful statements. Don't be afraid to admit that you do not have all the answers. **Do not speculate.**
- **Develop resiliency** – Your child will look to you for reassurance. Do not convey your own feelings of hopelessness, but rather let your child know that they will get through this difficult period.
- **Provide comfort** – Physical and verbal comforts are great healers.
- **Attend to physical manifestations of trauma** – Children will often complain of headaches, stomach aches, backaches, etc. Monitor physical symptoms such as loss of appetite, anxiety, sleep disturbance, etc. and determine whether medical intervention is required.
- **Maintain regular routines** – As much as possible, attempt to provide normalcy to your child. Humans are creatures of habit and derive comfort from regular routines.
- **Monitor media exposure** – Do not overexpose your child to media reports (especially preschool and elementary age children).
- **Seek additional support** – When appropriate, your child should be directed to community support agencies (see below).

*For more information visit our website at
www.surreyschools.ca*

Community and school support resources:

Options Community Services <i>counselling support and outreach</i>	604-584-5811
Peace Arch Community Services <i>counselling support and outreach</i>	604-538-2522
Surrey Hospice Society <i>counselling support inclusive of all cultures, faiths, beliefs</i>	604-584-7006
White Rock/South Surrey Hospice Society <i>counselling support inclusive of all cultures, faiths, beliefs</i>	604-531-7484
Diversity Community Resources Society <i>counselling in the appropriate language/cultural values</i>	604-597-0205
Family Doctor	Telephone Directory
School Counsellor	Local School