

School-Based Grief Support Group Post-Group Email

Thank you for enrolling (Child's name) in The Elizabeth Hospice's grief support group at (name of school). We appreciated the opportunity to spend time with your child and hope (she/he) found this experience valuable.

During the seven-week program, we shared information about grief and loss, coping skills, ways to talk about and remember a loved one, handling triggers and important milestones, and where to go for support. The group provided a safe space for your child to connect with other kids who "speak the same language" as a result of their shared experience.

While this program has ended, we realize that your child may still be struggling with grief and feelings of loss. There is no timeline on grief; it is a life-long process.

Please be aware of the following:

1. While children will not "get over" their grief, they will learn how to live life without their loved one.
2. Children will re-grieve every time they enter a new developmental stage.
3. Children often feel alone in their grief and that nobody understands what they are going through.
4. Your loss is different than your child's so you can't understand (his/her) pain, just like your child can't understand your pain. Be patient, check in often, follow your child's lead and offer support.
5. Connecting your child with kids from the support group will help normalize feelings and provide a safe place to vent.
6. Children tend to be private grievers. Your child may not show you (his/her) grief. This doesn't mean that they aren't still grieving, though.
7. Please don't ask your child to "be strong, get over it or deal with it." These comments will be received as insensitive and may drive a wedge between you and your child.
8. It's OK to talk about the person who died. Children often feel like they are the only ones grieving when no one talks about their person.
9. Give your child the opportunity to decide how to honor (his/her) loved one on special occasions.
10. The first two years of grief are the hardest for a child's adjustments.

We are here to help. The Elizabeth Hospice offers a variety of bereavement services for children and teens. These include:

- Peer Grief Support Groups, held in the evenings throughout the school year in Mission Valley and Escondido
- Camp Spero, a weekend summer camp
- Individual counseling

If you would like more information about how you can support your child, or if you have concerns about how your child is grieving, please contact The Elizabeth Hospice at 760-737-2050 or email me at melissa.lunardini@ehospice.org.

Warmest regards,
Melissa