

Ways to support your child or teenager affected by suicide



Download the Stay Alive suicide prevention app to help you or someone you are worried about www.stayalive.app

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Listen, validate and comfort

It's OK to feel worried / sad / confused

I'm here if you want to talk

For more tips see overleaf

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Pick up the phone

For help to support your child call Winston's Wish:

08088 020 021
(8am-8pm, Mon-Fri)



For worries about suicide call HOPELINE:

Call: 0800 068 4141 (9am-midnight)
Text: 07860 039 967

If you are struggling and need support:

Text SUSSEX to 85258 (any time)

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Learn more online

Visit:

www.first-hand.org.uk/supporting-children



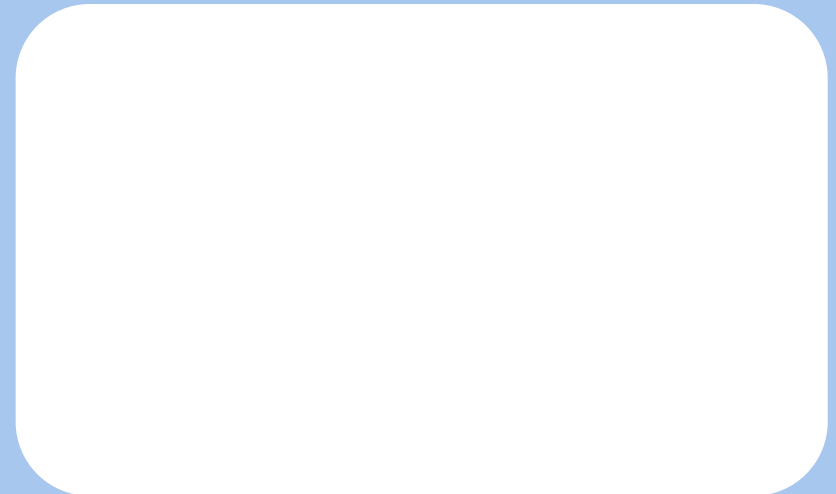
for information on how to support a child who has been affected by a suicide incident

www.childmind.org/guide/helping-children-cope-after-a-traumatic-event/

for tips on how to help your child recover

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Come to a drop-in



Some tips for talking with your child about witnessing a suicide

- Witnessing a suicide is a traumatic experience for anyone. Children will respond very differently depending on age, level of understanding and personality.
- Emotional trauma causes symptoms e.g. feeling anxious, crying, being quiet, remembering the event, sleeping problems, bedwetting, separation anxiety, poor concentration and behavioural problems. Symptoms are likely to get better over time but if you are worried ask for help.
- Be available to talk if they want to, but don't force them to talk or ask loads of questions. Let them choose their time and be prepared to stop what you're doing to listen to them. "Give yourself time and talk to me anytime."
- Most children will need more cuddles and repeated reassurance. Reassure your child that it was a very rare event which most people will never experience. "It was very shocking and scary, it's OK to feel worried, but you are safe, I am here."
- It's OK if you don't know all the answers. It's best to be honest and say something like "it was a sudden, unexpected death which means that we aren't sure of the details. It is really difficult for all of us to understand that such a sad thing has happened and that we don't have all the answers."
- Keep a normal routine, day to day play and activities are important for recovery.
- Some children may draw or play the event, this is OK and normal.
- Try to be calm and not shocked if children want to talk about gory details or seem to be laughing about it. This is a normal reaction to a shocking event. Stay calm "it must have been really scary for you but you are safe. (Name) has died forever/died by suicide/ended their life, but it was a very rare event, and things will get back to normal."
- Talk about the different people they can go to at home or at school if they are feeling worried.