

## Needs of children in the family

Children grieve too, each in their own way, and even very young children will react as they sense things have changed.

Your own intense grief may leave you temporarily unable to provide emotional support for your children. This is completely understandable and it is important that you receive support and look after yourself, which in turn can help you support your children. Perhaps for a time, a close friend or relative, with whom your children feel comfortable, could step in to give the extra care, time and attention they need.

Children often deal with bereavement differently to adults. Your child may get upset at the attention going to the person who has died, or feel the death is somehow their fault. Their behaviour may change, for example they could become clingy, sad or withdrawn, unable to concentrate, and they may bedwet. But if these problems persist, perhaps your child may benefit from some specialist help.

If you have children at school, it is a good idea to tell the teachers there has been a death in the family, and also let the staff know exactly what the child has been told.

## Looking forward

Grieving is a normal process, but everyone is different, and there is no right or wrong way of dealing with what you are feeling.

It may take a long time to feel you are able to live with your bereavement. Special occasions may be difficult and birthdays and anniversaries can be particularly painful.

You can never bring back the person who has died, and the sorrow for their lost life never leaves, but as time passes, the intensity of the pain will change.

## For help and support contact

Meningitis Research Foundation's **Freefone** 24 hour helpline

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**080 8800 3344 (UK)**

**1800 41 33 44 (Republic of Ireland)**

or visit our website

**www.meningitis.org**

or email **helpline@meningitis.org**

Meningitis Research Foundation provides support to those whose lives have been affected by meningitis and septicaemia.

If you have been bereaved, contact our **Freefone** 24 hour helpline and we can arrange one-to-one support for you. This could be by phone, or possibly a home visit if you would feel more comfortable talking to someone face to face, or we could put you in touch by telephone with one of our trained voluntary befrienders. Befrienders are people who have had a similar experience to you, which many people find helpful.

And do remember, if you need to talk to someone at any hour, day or night, our helpline team is always there.

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## Living with Bereavement The Way Forward



