

NEEDS OF CHILDREN

- ✓ To understand, to be understood and heard. Allow children to talk, to play, and to imagine.
- ✓ Children need to grieve, to know what they have lost, how and why it has been lost. They need to make sense of the loss. They can move on to living with the loss, while realising what this means for them.
- ✓ Children need to hope.
- ✓ A child can live through anything so long as he or she is told and is allowed to share with loved ones...in a safe environment.
- ✓ Parents might be so busy dealing with their own loss, or running on exhaustion that there is no time to care for the emotional needs of the child.
- ✓ Reassurance - children need to hear that they won't have to deal with this alone..... someone will be there.
- ✓ Regular review of information, understanding and fears
- ✓ Acknowledge what has happened ...
 - Other children often say they...
 - Perhaps this is too terrible to talk about...
 - This must be a big worry for you and so I'm pleased you've told me about what's happening and how you feel about it...
 - It's really difficult for me to know what to say. I think it would help if Mum and Dad know about what you're thinking and just how you feel. We could talk to them together or I could see them on my own. What do you think?
- ✓ Children should be told promptly, be involved in grieving, and have support (in secondary losses also) - *questions* to be answered as they arise.
- ✓ Routine helps provide a sense of security
- ✓ Give answers in the concrete before the abstract...
- ✓ Be a role model
- ✓ Children like involvement in rituals
- ✓ Children need acceptance of thoughts and feelings
- ✓ Children need empathy
- ✓ Children need to share
- ✓ Children need comfort

Remember children are less powerful
Remember to check religious or cultural beliefs.

A Balancing Act

Children need permission to play and be children.

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