

Techniques for Helping Bereaved Children



Listening Skills

When you are talking with a young person who has been bereaved, it is important to use all your skills of listening in order to have the best effect. These can include:-

- **Warmth and care** - show your concern, be accepting and friendly towards them.
- **Empathy** - try to understand how it feels to be in their situation and show that you would like to understand them.
- **Being non-judgemental** - accept their opinions, feelings and judgements.
- **Respect** - let them show and feel any emotion they choose.
- **Genuineness** - don't play a part. Be yourself.
- **Listen more than you talk** - you can't do both at the same time.
- **Clarify** - if you don't understand what someone has said, ask them to explain it by asking them a relevant question.
- **Summarize** - check that you have understood what you have been told by summarising occasionally.
- **Questions** - ask open questions like 'why', 'how', 'when' and 'what' to encourage the person to talk.
- **Silences** - can be used to marshal thoughts or to think about something difficult. Don't interrupt, but give them time.
- **Listen to what isn't said** - listen to how they speak, look at their body language.
- **Don't make assumptions** - wait for them to finish speaking before thinking you might have understood them.
- **Concentrate** - give all your attention to what is being said and try not to be distracted.