

When should I seek help?

Particularly in the early days after a death, counselling is not usually what children of any age want or need unless the death has been in very traumatic circumstances. The bereaved children that we work with at CancerCare tell us what they need initially is to be with adults who they already know and trust, rather than a stranger with whom they have to spend time building up a relationship. However, in time, needs will change and some children find speaking to a counsellor helpful, but others will not.

Get in touch

The minute you pick up the phone or walk through the door, you'll see why CancerCare is the go-to charity for professional and compassionate support across North Lancashire and South Cumbria.

Email: tct@cancercare.org.uk

Text: 07860 018278

www.cancercare.org.uk

Our Centres

Lancaster 01524 381820

Slynedales, Slyne Road, LA2 6ST

Morecambe 01524 381820

34 Northumberland Street, LA4 4AY

Kendal 01539 735800

Lakes Centre, Blackhall Road, LA9 4BT

Barrow 01229 836926

76 Duke Street, LA14 1RX



CancerCare



Grief, Loss and Bereavement

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A teenager's grief

The transition from childhood to adulthood can be a challenging process at the best of times; if someone important dies during these years it is made even more so.

It may be difficult to work out what behaviour is due to being a teenager and what is due to grieving – the emotional and behavioural changes can be very similar.

How can I help?

Be honest about the nature of the death. It might be necessary to give it in small chunks to avoid overload but be sure that any information is true so that it does not need to be changed later. Trust is really important to teenagers. Show them that you trust them.

Encourage them to be involved in the funeral or goodbye ritual. They help people to accept the reality of the death and to share the sorrow. Ask for their thoughts about the funeral, or memorial. Young people have strong and positive memories of a funeral if they had some part to play.

Be available to listen but let the teenager take the lead on when and where they talk. They may prefer to talk to their friends than to you.

What should I look out for?

Recognise the importance of memories. It can be good to talk whilst doing an activity like looking at a photo album. Get into the habit of talking about the person in everyday conversation 'your mum loved this' 'do you remember when' to indicate that you are comfortable talking about the person.

Warning signs to look out for can include:

- Withdrawn from friends and family
- Major change in behaviour
- Self-harming.
- Abuse of alcohol or drugs.
- Talking about suicide.
- Feeling guilty about the death.
- Decline in school performance.
- Constantly thinking about the death.

