



How to Talk About **DEATH** of **GRANDPARENT** with Your Child

Finding the strength to support others while coping with grief and loss can be difficult. When a grandparent dies, telling their grandchildren can leave anyone feeling helpless and at a loss for words. There are ways to talk with a child about the death of a grandparent. The death of a grandparent is often the first encounter with the death of someone important to a child or teen.

Here are some suggestions for navigating this challenging and sensitive conversation:

Some children may become anxious or clingy as they begin to understand that death is a part of life. Children look to adults for behavior cues. Their first encounter with grief and loss will influence how they respond to future losses.

Be honest with your child and tell the truth about what happened as soon as possible. This helps explain your own tears and pain and can model for your child how to mourn.

Cry together. Let them see your emotions and how you may feel different things at different times. It is healthy and healing.

Children will feel less anxious about you if they understand you are behaving differently because your parent has died. Explaining your behavior gives your child permission to express sadness. Acknowledge that all feelings are okay, and everyone may have different feelings about the loss.

The closer the relationship, the more painful the loss will be. For many children and teens, the death of a grandparent can feel like losing a parent.

The death of a grandparent is an opportunity for a family to grieve together and support each other. It illustrates that each person will experience the death in their own way.

This experience with death can be very hard. As children learn to reconcile their loss, they begin to understand that they can handle sad and painful losses and face challenges with greater resilience.

Don't hesitate to reach out to a professional if your child exhibits persistent regressive behaviors, nightmares, refusal to go to school or activities. You know your child best. If you have questions or concerns, please reach out to JCS at **410-466-9200**.

For more information on grief support, contact

Donna Kane
Grief Clinician

Jewish COMMUNITY SERVICES

at dkane@jcsbaltimore.org or 410-843-7394.

To learn more about grief support and resources or to access video programs for children, visit jcsbalt.org/grief.

