

SELF-CARE AND HEALING FOR CHILDREN AFTER DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MURDER-SUICIDE

After murder-suicide occurs, the grief and trauma may feel overwhelming for everyone in the family. The following self-care and healing activities can help children adapt, cope and heal.

BE WITH THEM

Spending quality time with children can take many forms. Anything that builds your connection will make a child feel more secure and will help them in their healing.

PLAY CALMING MUSIC

Sleep disturbances are common for children after they experience a death. Calming music, especially at bedtime, can help children have a more restful sleep.

CHECK IN REGULARLY

Ask open-ended questions about how the child is doing. Using “who, what, where, how” words keep conversations going. Make yourself available to answer any questions they might have as they process what happened and navigate life without their parents.

ENCOURAGE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Research shows that physical activity increases levels of endorphins, which help the body naturally cope with pain and stress. Going on walks, playing catch or basketball, swimming, or bike riding can be free or low-cost activities. Organized sports can also be a helpful tool for routine physical activity and support.

ENCOURAGE HEALTHY EATING

Nutrient-dense food from a well-rounded diet is an important component to healing after trauma. Some children may comfort themselves with unhealthy food while others may not eat much at all. Talk to children about healthy food choices and make healthy options available.

HELP CHILDREN IDENTIFY SUPPORT

There may be different people in children's lives that fulfill different roles. Help them identify “Someone I can talk to when I am sad...” “Someone that does not mind talking about the person or people who died...” “Someone to have fun with...” Write it down with them so they always have a reminder of who they can reach out to.

IDENTIFY BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUPS

Children can benefit from meeting other children going through grief. There may be ongoing, time-limited, or one-time camps for children to join. We can help you find a camp near you!

GET THEM THEIR OWN JOURNAL

Writing and drawing can be very healing. Many journals are inexpensive and can be decorated so they feel individualized and unique. Encourage writing and drawing whenever they like.