

# Khululeka

## Grief Support for Children and Youth

### Information on Grief for Court Workers

As a court worker you probably come across a lot of traumatised children who have to give evidence in court.

This probably causes you a lot of emotional upheaval, as it is very hard not to get frustrated and angry at situations and people.

- Develop an understanding of you own feelings and reactions, so that you can be safe place for the child.
- It helps if you breath deeply and learn ways to protect yourself emotionally.
- Be soft spoken and gentle with the child and treat them as equals
- Print out the "What to say and what not say PDF" from this site.
- Read up on grief and attend one of our courses.

Sometimes when we are confronted with grieving children we feel overwhelmed and helpless. Most of us want to help and want to reduce the pain that the child is feeling or we are scared to get too close to the child and remind the child of the pain and it starts crying.

So we end up saying things like: you must forget, you must be strong, you must not let this thing make you unhappy. But this exactly can lead children to feel that their pain has no value.

The child experiences the pain as a way of connecting with the person who has died. Many children are actually afraid that they will forget the person, because then they are really not there any more.

#### **Understanding about children's grief**

Children go through different phases and are often confused about that is happening with them. Frequently they feel isolated and end up isolating themselves even more by being angry and rude or withdrawn.

To begin with the child will probably feel shock and numbness, not feel anything at all and not believe what has happened.

They might not sleep at night and wet their beds, act out and be explosive and angry. They might more often be ill, have tummy aches, headaches and rashes and not like to eat their food. The body's immune system is usually weaker at the time of a loss that is why they are more susceptible to viruses and have colds and flu.

They might not be able to concentrate at school and find it hard to do their homework.

They often feel empty inside, sad and tearful and then suddenly seem to be quite happy and normal. These mood swings are natural.

They might feel guilty about the death (children often do) thinking they have somehow caused it.

All this is normal.

More information on [www.khululeka.org](http://www.khululeka.org)

