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### Quick emergency kit for Bereavement & Loss situations

A few recommendations you could use for situations & supporting an issue arising during the school day:

If a child brings a trouble to you involving loss (parent/family illness separation/divorce/prison or other loss situations) or in bereavement (parent/family/pet)

- If you can see a child is distressed whilst telling you about a current situation, it is important to speak with them straight away (remember, Maslow's Hierarchy of Need – a child cannot function in lessons adequately unless these needs are met firstly)
- If a child has given you information & they appear not to be upset. It is more than likely that they are emotionally traumatised, but unable to express or understand these feelings. Visibly children can be good at hiding how they feel because they cannot always explain their emotions.

Supportive solutions if you can't see a child immediately:

- Listen to the child's first sentences.
- Tell the child you can see how important their disclosure is & that you will come back to them straight away once you have dealt with whatever it is you need to deal with firstly. Tell them that you have already prioritised that this is important & that you will find a safe, quiet spot in which to take them to as soon as you can.
- When you are ready, collect the child & take some tissues with you!

Supportive solutions for when you speak to a child:

- Collect a notebook or safeguarding form, in case you need to report any concerns to the safeguarding lead.
- Always tell a child at the start of speaking with them, that if you need to talk to their teacher or someone more senior in school, that you would need to do so because you have to share information to support their safety and well-being & to help their family in times of need. If this distresses them further, just reassure them that school is a part of supporting them and their family. Make them aware that you understand how sensitive talking about things they are worried about can be.
- Listen, let them speak. Try not to intervene with comments about your own experiences at this stage, just listen 😊 (you can give them some paper to draw on too, because it helps them to deal with nervous fidgeting)
- Reflect how they are feeling: "I can see that you are finding this really tricky to talk about, understandably so..."
- Make them aware that you are also feeling sad or upset about their news. It is ok to show your emotion and allow them to see that displaying feelings is ok. If you feel like crying, tell the child how you are feeling & use some tissues as well if you need to.
- Again, reassure them that you understand how they are feeling & at that point if you want to mention that you have also seen family members with illness/ death or whatever link is appropriate (just for them to see that it is part of life/ loss, death & to be aware that others experience this/ they are not alone)

- Always use real terms for bereavement such as dying, death. It is better for children to understand the finality of death, rather than using words around it. Children respond better to honesty.
- Tell the child that the person will always remain in their heart (this helps during grieving because it is a way of allowing them to hold on to the memory of someone special. You can say 'memories never die' & talk about how the person/pet will always remain in their heart.
- Good books to read before they return to class & dependent on time...'[The Invisible String](#)' by Patrice Karst. '[The Heart & the Bottle](#)' by Oliver Jeffers & a few relevant activities from '[Muddles, Puddles & Sunshine](#)' activity book.
- Ask them if they are ready to return to class now. If they say not yet, try to encourage that it is a good idea to try to focus on seeing their friends now & giving it a try (sometimes it is better to make it a short chat & not spend too long going over things)
- Let the child know that they can check in with you, you will check in with them & reassure them of a plan of action.