**Strategies you and your child can use to cope with shock and grief**

**All of us respond to shock and grief in our own unique way and experience a range of feelings or none (numbness) which are all within the bounds of what is normal in the early stages. The following is a range of strategies that you may consider appropriate to support your child through this difficult time.**

**Play:**

* Talk about what happened using a doll house, puppets, stuffed animals, phone
* Run, jump, play on big equipment to get stored up energy out

**Art**

* drawing
* painting
* clay
* take pictures

**Music**

* write songs
* play songs
* listen to music

**Storytelling/Reading**

* reading stories about the person who died
* telling stories to each other about the person who died
* reading stories/books together
* create your own life story

**Writing**

* letter to the person who died
* write a letter from the person who died to you
* make a wish list
* write in a feelings journal
* write poems about feelings or memories

**Creative Expression**

* let go a balloon with a note in it
* create a scrapbook of favourite memories
* make something to leave at the grave side
* work on a memories quilt together
* start a memory box

**Social Media**

While social media can be an excellent source of sharing our memories and our collective grief, you must supervise how your children use it with the respect and sensitivity for the bereaved family being upmost in your considerations.

When the child shows you something they have made or done, encourage them to tell you more about it. For example, "I see you drew a picture. Tell me more about it. What does this mean to you?"

Allow the child to be your teacher. Having a dialogue with the child about their expressions of grief allows healing to occur.

Below is a link to the **Irish Hospice Foundation** who have put together a number of excellent resources to support us through grief in these exceptional times

<https://hospicefoundation.ie/bereavement-2-2/covid19-care-and-inform/>

Be sensitive to your child’s responses and try to respond with strategies which provide comfort and security such as blankets on the couch, favourite foods, milky drinks like hot chocolate etc. It’s ok for them to be happy again in time, this does not mean that they have forgotten their friend. They should be encouraged to think about their friend in terms of the good they remember from the friendship, the fun times they had, what they learned from him etc.

If you have more serious concerns about your child’s reactions, which are longer term, please seek advice from your GP/local healthcare provider.