

Glitter jar

These can be helpful for children who are having a panic attack. Glitter jars have a calming effect as they offer a distraction.

Create a GLITTER JAR

- ★ Finding a jar or plastic bottle and allow your child to decorate it however they like.
- ★ Fill the bottle up 3/4 of the way with water. Next, add clear glue, food coloring, and glitter then shake.
- ★ Seal the lid and you are ready to go.



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Supporting Children with their Emotions



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Bereavement and your child's emotions

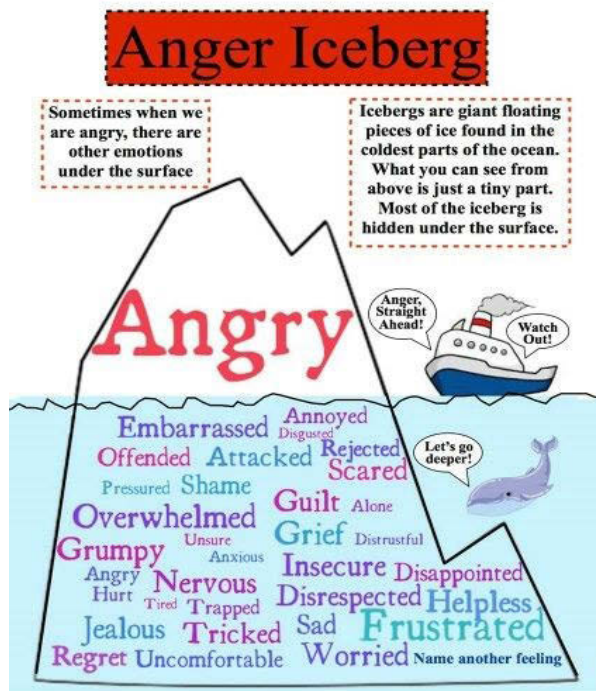
Children react in different ways when they experience a bereavement; anger and anxiety are two of the most common emotional reactions.

Anger - Anger is often an emotional response used by children to cover up feelings of fear. To help your child feel calm they need reassurance that they are safe; this will help them to calm down. Once they are calm they can think and reason rationally.

In order to calm your child and reassure them that they are safe you need to connect emotionally in that moment. This connection can be made by listening and being empathetic towards your child regardless of the behaviours that they are displaying.

- Once they are calm you can talk about how they were feeling when they were angry and why they were feeling that way.
- Consistency and predictability is key in helping children to feel safe. It can be helpful if you can both engage in an activity on a regular basis together as this will help demonstrate your reliability.
- Older children may find it helpful to think and talk about why they feel the way they do. Ask them to reflect as this can help them to understand and begin to rationalise their emotions and feelings.

Remember to be kind to yourself — you are doing the best that you can for your child.



If you are worried your child's emotions are affecting their day to day life, relationships or ability to learn and develop, it is worth seeking professional help.

Discuss your concerns with a teacher or Pastoral care worker at your child's school—they may be able to offer additional advice or let you know where to find further support if needed.

You can talk to their GP; your child doesn't have to go with you if they do not want to. However if your child is over 18 they will need to ask for the help themselves. If they are not willing to do this, you may wish to seek support for yourself as this may help you to further support your child.

It may be helpful to write down the things that make you think your child has low self-esteem, as well as anything that you think may be contributing to this to take along with you to the appointment.

If your child is under 18, your GP may decide your family would benefit being referred to the Early Help Hub to consider additional support.

You can make contact with the Early Help Hub directly if you prefer on 01872 322277— they will have a better idea of what current support is available in the county, this may include specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

Kooth offer support to young people in Cornwall through online or one-to-one counselling and mentoring support. Visit: [Kooth.com](https://www.kooth.com)



YoungMinds Parent's Helpline offers information and advice to any adult worried about the emotional problems, behaviour or mental health of a young person up to the age of 25.

YoungMinds helpline can be contacted on 0808 802 5544



Activity ideas to help your child develop strategies to self-regulate and take control of their emotions...

- Your child may find it helpful to have a favourite toy that they can hold when they are feeling angry, anxious or distressed. It may be a toy that someone they love or that they feel safe with has given to them. Alternatively they may like to have a sensory toy, such as a fidget cube or Play-Doh.
- Co-read a book that your child enjoys; this can be really soothing and help reduce feelings of distress.
- Talk with your child, encourage your child to guide the conversation where they want to; having someone there to listen to them will help them to feel safe.
- Encourage them to get involved in a form of exercise as this releases endorphins that will help them to feel better. They may enjoy something quite physically demanding, such as trampolining or something calmer like taking a dog for a walk.
- You could blow bubbles with your child, taking it in turns to try and catch them. This activity will help to calm them by regulating their breathing.

Resources to consider

- 'A Volcano In My Tummy: Helping children to handle anger' (book available on Amazon)
- 'Worry Monster' children can write down their worries and put it in the monsters 'zippy' mouth. The process of writing down worries can really help to reduce how big the worry feels for your child.
- 'What to do when you worry too much: A kid's guide to overcoming anxiety' (book available on Amazon).
- 'The Invisible String by Patrice Karst (also available on Amazon)

Anxiety - Children often experience anxiety following a bereavement. Anxiety may also be linked with low self-esteem.

You can help to support your child manage anxious feelings by providing them with a safe space that they feel able to talk in.

It is important that children know anxiety is a normal biological response to certain things and that you are not trying to eliminate it, but helping them to manage and take ownership of the feelings.

Following a bereavement children may be concerned that they will lose someone else that they love or that they may die themselves.

It may be helpful to ask your child if they would like to draw how they are feeling. Some children may find this easier than trying to find the appropriate words. Reassure your child whilst they are talking or drawing - remind them that they are safe -this can help to calm their nervous system and help them to stay calm.

Children may feel guilty about the death; guilt occurs when anger is turned inwards on the child. Children may be convinced that the death happened because of something they said or did or something that they did not say or do.

Children may feel guilty if they are allowed to do things that they wouldn't have been allowed to do with the person who has died (such as going to bed at a later time). Children may also feel guilty if they forget to think about the special person, even if it is just for five minutes.

- You can help to reduce feelings of guilt by reassuring your child that they are not to blame and what they did or did not do had nothing to do with the death.
- Explore how your child feels and why they feel responsible; they may find this helpful to rationalise their thoughts and feelings.
- Reassure your child that they can talk about how they are feeling with you as and when they need to.



Low Mood and Sadness

Children may experience low mood and sadness when they are grieving, during these times it is important to reassure your child that you are there for them and that these are normal feelings and emotions to experience .

Maybe take your child to their favourite place or do an activity together that you both enjoy. Making time to do lovely things together will give you both a moment to relieve yourselves from the sadness that you may be feeling.

Separation Anxiety

Following a bereavement it is normal for children to experience separation anxiety. Children are often used to seeing the same people daily whether they are at home, in school or at clubs that they may attend. When someone they love is no longer there this can cause the child worry that another special person will die.

It is important to talk with the child about why their special person died, explaining this should help the child to understand that there was a reason for the death and that death doesn't just occur without a cause.

You could give your child something that you treasure when they are not with you, this will reassure them that you will be coming back as they have one of your things.

'The Invisible String' book is really useful in helping children to understand how although you may not physically be by their side that you are still there for them.

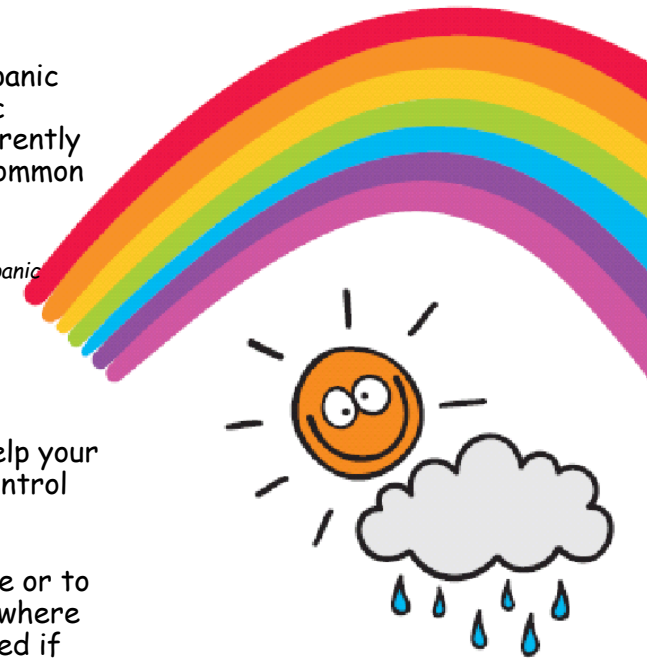
Panic Attacks

Children may experience panic attacks at any time. Panic attacks can present differently in every child; the most common symptoms being:

- *An overwhelming feeling of panic*
- *Shaking limbs*
- *Sensation of pins and needles*
- *Difficulty in breathing*
- *Dizziness*

Here are a few ways to help your child regain emotional control during a panic attack—

- Take your child outside or to a different area than where the panic attack started if this is possible. A change in the environment will be a distraction that will help to reduce the child's feelings of panic.
- Give your child an ice cube to hold, this sensation will help to calm the mind through distraction.
- Reassure your child that they are ok and that you are there with them.
- Count with your child to 10
- Get your child to put both feet on the ground, place their hands with their palms faced upwards and encourage them to breathe deeply in through their nose and out of their mouth.
- Encourage them to use their senses to connect with the reality around them and remind them that they are safe



Square breathing technique
Square breathing is a grounding technique that will help the child's automatic nervous system shift from fight vs. flight to a calmer state.

