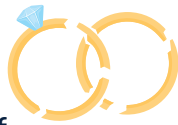


As much as it is hard and painful for adults to go through a divorce, children are often experiencing similar effects. Regardless of how your child(ren) may react and respond in a divorce situation, you play an important role in supporting them as they navigate through this potentially confusing and challenging period. Here are some tips you can try:



CONNECT

Focus on your relationship with your child as he/she is your most important family member now. Carve out time to bond and spend quality time together.

OBSERVE

Look out for changes in your child's mood or behaviour (e.g. emotional outbursts, withdrawal, not eating or sleeping well, school refusal).

CHAT

Your child may have worries and questions about the divorce and its effects on the family. Be open in answering questions they may have.

SUPPORT

Support your child in making sense of the divorce and coping with it. Reduce excessive sharing of your feelings as it may overwhelm the child. Take care of yourself by talking to another adult or a professional.

KEEP ROUTINES

Routines are important and helpful in ensuring some predictability and stability in your child's life amidst the divorce (e.g. no change in sleep time).

SET BOUNDARIES

Be neutral when talking about the other parent in front of your child. Allow your child to stay out of "adults' matters" and avoid triangulating them as it can be stressful for a child to take sides.

HELP FOR FAMILIES IS AVAILABLE

Strengthening Families Programme@Family Service Centre (FAM@FSC) aims to support couples who may face greater challenges in their marriage, and families showing early signs of stress. Support programmes are also available for children from divorcing or divorced families to cope with their family situation.

Children of Divorce Intervention Programme (CODIP)

- To minimise the negative effects of divorce on children whose parents are divorcing or have divorced
- For children 7-12 years old
- 6 sessions of 2 hours each

Children-in-Between Programme (CiB Children)

- For children (6-15 years old) caught in-between the conflicts of their divorced parents
- 3 sessions of 2 hours each

Children-in-Between Programme for Parents (CiB Parents)

- For parents who are divorcing or have divorced
- 2 sessions of 2 hours each

There are 10* FAM@FSCs across Singapore. Scan the QR code or find your nearest centre from the Ministry of Social and Family Development website: www.msf.gov.sg/FAMatFSC

For those living in or near Hougang, Serangoon or Sengkang, please reach out to MWS FAM@FSC by phone at 6330 1080 (office hours) or by email at fam@mws.sg.

*Accurate as of 2024



Untying the Knot: Impact of Divorce & Ways to Cope With It



Divorce is an exceptionally difficult process. It can stir up a wide range of emotions such as sadness and relief. Grieving a divorce can feel especially hard because the divorcing individual feels like they are going through it alone. It is important to communicate your grief to your close family and friends so they can provide the extra support you need during this challenging time.

This guide aims to help individuals move from grief and transition into a new chapter of life with time, support, and coping strategies.

DIVORCE GRIEF

No one enters a marriage with divorce in mind. The end of a relationship is a major loss, and the grief process is to be expected. There are five stages in the grieving process:

STAGE 1: DENIAL

"He's just upset. Things will be ok if I apologise." Denying it gives you time to absorb the news and begin to process it. It also helps numb you to the intensity of the divorce.

STAGE 2: ANGER

"I hate him! He will regret leaving me!" Anger is hiding many of the emotions and pain that you carry. This anger may be redirected at other people, or even inanimate objects. Anger may mask itself in feelings like resentment.

STAGE 3: BARGAINING

"If only I spent more time with her, she might have stayed..." You may look for ways to regain control or to feel like you can affect the outcome of the divorce. You may find yourself making a lot of "what if" and "if only" statements.



STAGE 4: DEPRESSION

"Why go on at all?" This may feel like a quiet stage of grief. You may isolate yourself from others in order to fully cope with the loss. You may feel foggy, heavy, and confused.

STAGE 5: ACCEPTANCE

"Ultimately, this was a healthy choice for me." It doesn't mean you have moved past the grief or loss. It does, however, mean you have accepted the divorce and come to understand what it means in your life now.

You may not experience all the five stages or experience all of them in order. Some stages may last longer than others, and that is ok. If you feel stuck in stages 1-4 for a prolonged time, consider reaching out to family members or friends, or seeking professional assistance to help you work through these emotions.

Overcoming grief after a divorce can be painful and difficult, but time and coping strategies can help you to move to the next phase of your life. Here are some coping strategies to consider:

BE KIND TO YOURSELF

It is normal to feel emotions such as sadness, anger, pain, and betrayal. It is a difficult period and you do not need to feel bad about the feelings you are experiencing. Work through them with someone you trust.

GET SUPPORT

Stay connected with close support networks whom you can rely on in times of need, such as your family members and friends.

KEEP ROUTINES

Maintain your routines as far as possible as it can help to create a sense of predictability during this difficult period of change. Continue to go to work, exercise, meet up with people, etc.

HAVE ME-TIME

Take care of yourself by prioritising me-time and picking up a new hobby to keep your mind engaged amidst the stressful divorce matters. If you have additional roles such as caregiving for a child or senior, the me-time becomes especially important. You cannot pour from an empty cup.

