As well as encouraging your child or young person to talk about their feelings, talk to them about how you are feeling too. Don’t try to put on a brave face if this is not how you feel because they may learn to hide their feelings now, and in the future. Let them know that they do not need to protect you and at the same time do not expect them to be your source of support.

The death of a child is likely to plunge a family into chaos but try to keep routines such as meal and bedtimes time as regular as they were prior to the death. This will help to safeguard the physical and emotional well -being of you all and maintain a sense of stability and security for the children.

Allow children to return to school, college or work when they feel ready as this will help them progress though the journey of their grief. It will be helpful to talk to staff at school so that you can agree how best to support your child during periods of distress. It will be important though that you and school maintain your boundaries to maintain a feeling of normality and security.

Bereavement affects people in very different ways and therefore if your child or young person is displaying regressive behaviour such as bed wetting / soiling, baby talk or being a little absent minded or short tempered don’t be too quick to chastise them, they are grieving too. If you become angry with them they may struggle to process their grief effectively.

Make sure your children know that no matter how sad you are, you love them too. Praise them for whatever they do well. Let them know when their behaviour is unacceptable and apologise when you make mistakes.

Try not to be overprotective or overly permissive.

Spend time together, sharing your grief and memories but also doing normal things and having fun.

Look after yourself.

If you are concerned about your bereaved child or young person then don’t be ashamed to ask for professional help. Speak to your Community Paediatric Nurse, your GP or someone at school. You can also ask for advice from The Gaddum Centre.