

Viva Child and Family Phone Mentoring Programme



Guidelines for Mentors: Part 2

Guidelines for Mentors Part 2

This guide will support you to deliver **Phase 2 of the Viva Child and Family Phone Mentoring Programme – ‘Connecting In’**. As a mentor, you will support families who are struggling to cope with issues of mental health, loss and safety in their communities.

This guide will help to remind you of the key points you learnt in your mentor training, including information on how to be an effective mentor, top tips on maintaining your own wellbeing, and key information about the 3 calls. As you mentor families, remember to refer back to this guide whenever you need to.

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1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has become a longer-term crisis which has specific impacts on children and families. **Phase 2 of the Viva Child and Family Phone Mentoring Programme – ‘Connecting In’** is designed to pick up on these issues and connect families to longer-term and more in-depth support. This is done by linking them with a project or activity run by your church, organisation or network, or by referring the family for external support.

Phase 2 builds on the success of the original **Phase 1 Phone Mentoring Programme (6 themes)**:



This new phase of the Phone Mentoring programme consists of 3 new calls which have been developed as stand-alone sessions. The themes are:

1. **Finding Hope in Hard Times** – Supporting families to identify strategies that help them to cope and be resilient in the face of ongoing crisis
2. **Coping with Loss** – Helping to manage feelings of grief from bereavement or from other losses during the pandemic
3. **Staying Safe under Pressure** – Raising awareness and preventing the risks of child labour, early marriage and trafficking

These new themes are responding to key risk factors identified in Phase 1 of the mentoring programme, and are addressing emerging risks and issues. The additional ‘Connecting In’ focus, where families are linked to additional programmes through the network, church, organisation, or through external support, enables deeper and longer-lasting support.

In light of this, it is important to be prepared before the calls, so you are ready to share relevant and available opportunities with the families you are mentoring. Information about where to refer families should have been covered in your Mentoring training. If you are unsure, contact your supervisor before you start carrying out the calls.

Before you start mentoring families:

- You need to know how to ensure your own wellbeing and build resilience
- You need to be equipped to help children and families through difficult issues
- You need to know how to deal with and refer on child protection issues which are emerging as a result of the pandemic

- You need to know how to connect families into long term support beyond the phone mentoring sessions

Connecting In

Feedback received from Phase 1 of the Viva Child and Family Mentoring programme was that mentors were keen to see children and families being supported beyond the duration of the 6 phone calls.

To offer families this long-term support, it is important to be aware of available programmes, support groups and organisations in the locality that they can connect with beyond the mentoring sessions.

Activities or programmes could include programmes run by your Viva Network, such as Creative Learning Centres, Child Safe Clubs, Lifeskills training, parenting courses or income generation activities. You might also think of making referrals to specific projects or activities run by individual network members (organisations or churches) such as healthcare, family support groups or basic needs support.

You should also be aware of agencies or helplines offering more focused support such as counselling, protection referral services, healthcare or welfare support.

Before starting the **Phase 2 mentoring calls**, create a clear list of available programmes and resources that you can refer families to and know how to connect them in with programmes and services. It is also important to note that **all referral programmes and organisations need to be checked and approved by your supervisor before you recommend them to a family**. The **Training for Mentors** which Viva has also produced to go alongside these guidelines will help you to decide on these referral options together. If you have any questions about any of this, please contact your supervisor.

Supporting children's resilience through mentoring

Through the mentoring programme, a key idea in supporting children and families through this time is the concept of building resilience in children and families and helping them to increase their capacity to cope with difficulties.

While all children are vulnerable times of crises, children also have the ability to meet, bear and recover from exposure to loss. This capacity to cope and "bounce back" after stressful experiences is called resilience. Resilience refers to the ability to react or adapt positively to a difficult and challenging event or experience.

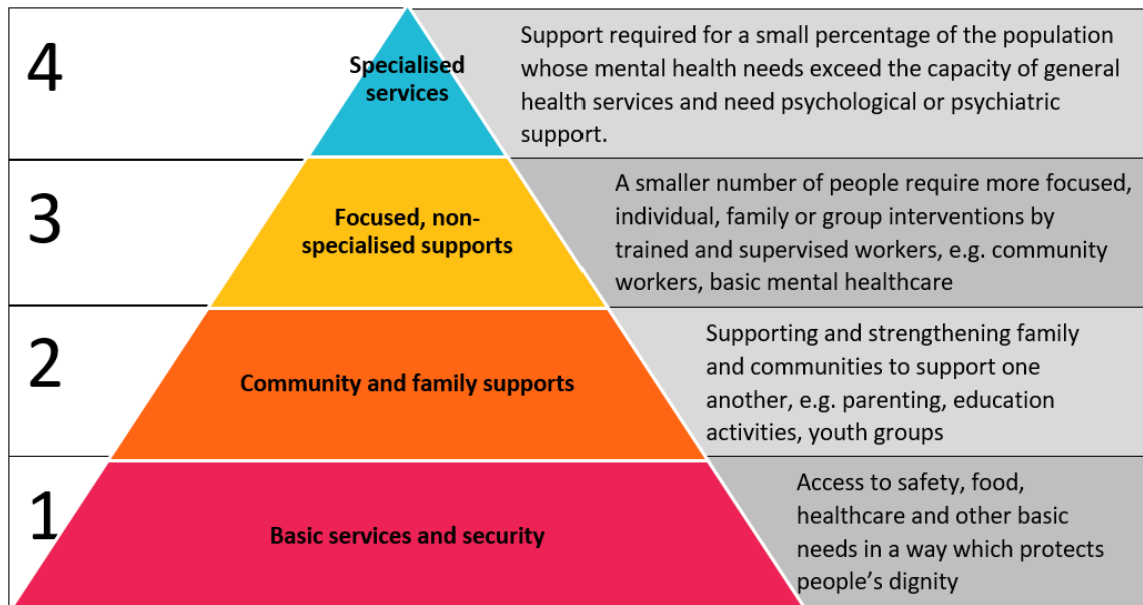
The '**psychosocial support pyramid**' is a helpful tool to show us how our work with families during this time of COVID-19 can support their resilience and enable them to cope with this crisis.

Although entire communities have been affected by the pandemic, very few people need specialised services because of severe reactions. Most people can be helped through the provision of basic services and security, including psychosocial support.

Research has shown that there is a small percentage of children (3-5%) who need individual counselling and psychological support following a crisis (which should only be provided by trained professionals), but that most children can be helped through the support of their families and

communities. Our response should therefore seek to strengthen the capacity of caregivers, and other adults in children’s lives, to provide everyday psychosocial care to children. In this way we can focus on restoring resilience in the face of challenging circumstances.

The IASC **psychosocial support pyramid** illustrates a layered system of complementary supports. The layers represent the different kinds of support people may need to recover from a crisis.



This model recognises that children and communities have strengths and resources of their own, and tries to build on and support these. Mentoring families can assist with community and family support, while also connecting families to access basic needs or focused support through the mentoring programme.

Risk factors and Protective factors

Although children are very different from one another, there are certain factors and capabilities in children’s lives that have been shown to influence their level of resilience. These are called ‘protective factors’ which give people psychological ‘cover’ and help to reduce the likelihood of negative psychological effects when faced with hardship or suffering. Some of these factors are innate but many can be developed and strengthened through psychosocial support.

This is good news for us as we work with children, as we can proactively think about ways in which we can support and encourage children’s resilience. One simple way to do that is to look at risk and protective factors – resilience happens when protective factors that support wellbeing are stronger than the risk factors that cause harm.

We can consider the risk factors and protective factors below, and think about how we can use the mentoring programme, and the other programmes we provide, to reduce these risk factors for children.

Risk factors:

- Difficult or frightening experiences
- Lack of understanding of what has happened
- Loss of family home, friends, or caregivers
- Loss of self-respect and self-confidence

- Poor living conditions or lack of access to basic services like healthcare
- Poor diet and nutrition
- Lack of opportunities for education and play
- Excessive burden of paid or unpaid work
- Uncertainty about the future
- Disability

Protective factors:

- Self-esteem, self-confidence, and communication skills
- Can think through and process events and look to the future
- Can express themselves through play, arts, games, community rituals
- Positive parenting and carers who respond to the child's emotional needs
- Positive family environment that provides love, support and discipline
- Can express feelings and anxieties to adults who listen to them
- Friends who are good role models and a source of fun and acceptance
- Able to maintain normal family life, religious practices, language
- A positive school experience where teachers are supportive
- Part of a strong community where children are active members

2. Skills and Support for Mentors

Mentoring children and families can be very rewarding, as you come alongside people in a meaningful way, giving them a chance to share their feelings and experiences. However, talking to people who may be struggling and going through hard times can be hard for the mentor, so it is important that you build personal resilience and understand how to do your role well. This handbook covers the information from your mentor training, so you can refer back to it as often as you need.

First, make sure that you have received training and that you know what your role is as a mentor. If you have any questions about this feel free to contact your supervisor.

Mentor's Role Description

Characteristics

- Has a mature approach - is steady and calm when presented with difficult circumstances
- Reliable and trustworthy - committed to journeying with the child and family and can be trusted to keep information confidential
- Can show empathy and understanding

Skills

- Able to listen and discern how to respond appropriately
- Has the ability to see strengths and can build on positives
- Proactive rather than reactive. Able to think ahead for issues that may crop up

Role:

- Take time to understand the themes covered in the call guides
- Talk with identified family on the phone (or in person depending on location) using the call guides provided

- Signpost and connect family to additional support where appropriate

Person specification:

- Trained in child protection and how to work with children
- Have some experience of working with children and families
- Enthusiastic about supporting children and families in challenging situations
- Excellent communication skills

Tools you need:

- Effective training on how to mentor families and safeguard themselves as mentors
- Call guides
- Mentor's handbook
- Ongoing support throughout the programme

During the mentoring process, you will probably face issues and challenges where you might not always know exactly what to do. As mentors you should have seen and signed **Viva's Safeguarding Code of Conduct when making phone calls to families and children** as well as seeing a list of 'dos and don'ts' in the original **Guidelines for Mentors**. These guidelines can help lessen the possibilities of difficult situations arising. However, unexpected things can still happen, and it is good to think ahead to what we might do in some of these situations, or how we can get help.

Following feedback from mentors, the following guidelines prevent some of the challenges that they described from happening when mentoring families. These challenges are also addressed during the training session **Skills and Support for Mentors**.

Familiarise yourself with these guidelines for interacting with families through the Viva Child and family Phone Mentoring programme. See if there is anything else that you would like to add to these guidelines.

Guidelines for interacting with families through the Viva Child and Family Phone Mentoring Programme

- 1. Establish boundaries.** Before entering the mentoring relationship, it is important that you know what your boundaries are. This will make it easier to say 'no' and to make sure you will not be forced into doing something you are not comfortable with, or giving beyond your capacity. In the first conversation with the family you should agree:
 - When and how often you will phone and for how long,
 - What you will do if you feel that you or the family feel that it is not working,
 - That you will not contact one another outside the scheduled phone calls.
- 2. Gender.** To avoid any possibility of misunderstanding, dependency or romantic relationships, only talk to adults who are the same gender as you.
- 3. Maintain confidentiality.** Do not disclose the name of the family or child being mentored, unless they have given consent. It is important that the family understands that mentoring is a safe space for them to express emotions and that they can talk freely. What is spoken about should remain confidential. However, involvement of a third party may be required where:
 - The parent or child indicates they are going to harm themselves or someone else
 - The child says that they are at risk of harm
 - The parent or child says they or someone they know are breaking a law

In these situations, do not discuss with anyone else except the network child protection focal point. Professional help may be required or the case may need to be signposted to another agency immediately.

- 4. Competence.** Be aware of your own levels of mentoring competence and experience. Never overstate them or promise to do something which can't be fulfilled.

Remember to be willing to ask for help when you need it! It's really important that you don't feel that you need to deal with challenging situations on your own, but feel able to refer to your supervisor with any challenges

Here are some tips to give families a positive mentoring experience

Top tips to give families a positive mentoring experience

- **Give families and children time and space to share their emotions. Listen more than you would normally** to make sure they feel properly heard.
- **Empower families and children.** Encourage families and children to focus on short-term or longer-term goals where they have an element of control or influence.
- **Focus on strengths.** Identify what families are good at, enjoy doing, achievements and high points. This can help foster a positive outlook.
- **Connect families to further support.** Don't feel you have to do everything on your own
- **Opportunities to debrief.** Make sure that you have opportunities to debrief with a network staff member.

Tips for looking after your own Mental Health and Wellbeing

Coming alongside families in this difficult time as a mentor is very rewarding, but it can also be difficult at times. Speaking to families about their struggles can affect your own wellbeing if you are not prepared. The following section will help you to develop good strategies to protect your own wellbeing throughout your time as a mentor.

It is really important that you do not feel that you need to deal with challenging situations on your own, but feel able to refer to your supervisor with any challenges. Make sure you are looking after your own wellbeing – to help and support others, we need to start with ourselves.

Thinking and perspective:

- Gratitude – set aside a few minutes each day to reflect on a few things you're thankful for
- Accept uncertainty and keep things in perspective – we are living through uncertain times so all we can do is focus on those things we can control and what we can do
- Recognise that your feelings are normal and ok. The emotions you are feeling right now (anger, sadness, fear) are normal responses to an abnormal situation.
- Write down worries to give yourself some space; you might also try analysing evidence for and against the worry and seeing if you can problem solve them.
- Be reasonable with your expectations of yourself, and at the beginning of your workday, be clear about what you want to achieve today and what your key priorities are

Physical wellbeing:

- Establish a routine
- Eating a healthy diet
- Get enough sleep
- Regular exercise can lift your mood and increase your energy levels. It doesn't have to be strenuous and you can pick something you enjoy so you will be able to stick with it! For example, going for a walk during your day, or doing stretches in the morning.

Social connections:

Building and maintaining positive relationships with people can be an important part of wellbeing. It is disorienting to be so removed from those we love. It is also strange to be away from colleagues.

- Maintain social connections – e.g. phoning a friend or relative, arranging to speak with a colleague or friend
- Think about who energises you and reach out to them for a conversation. Limit time with those who don't.
- Think about who you can support and get in touch with them as well.
- Find ways to support one another as educators such as through peer support groups or a buddy system

Self-care:

Find some moment in the day when you do something that is just for yourself:

- Engage in a spiritual practice. This could be prayer, spending time in nature, or engaging in meaningful contributions to others.
- Make time to do something that will allow your brain to calm: prayer, cooking, gardening
- Be kind to yourself – talk to yourself as you would a friend
- Be creative – music, art, writing, growing plants, cooking a new recipe
- Talk about or write down your feelings. Expressing how you feel will mean you have a choice about what to do with that feeling: suppressing it will mean that the feeling can overwhelm you.
- Take breaks and set boundaries around working hours and work communication

From the tips above, what are you are already good at? What do you find challenging? Is there something you want to work on or try for the first time yourself?

Wellbeing Plan

A wellbeing action plan can help you to put good practices in place to know how to take care of yourself. It is a good idea to complete a wellbeing plan ahead of time, so that if you start to feel you are struggling, you already have a plan in place. A wellbeing plan is a living document, so you can keep adding to it and reviewing it as you find more things that help you.

What helps me to stay well?

(e.g. going for a run, cup of tea, listen to music, talk to a friend, take a proper lunch break)

What things can I do every day to stay well?

(e.g. exercise, sleep and food as well as things that make you happy)

What do I want to avoid every day?

(e.g. using social media, putting pressure on myself)

What are the warning signs that I am struggling?

(e.g. feeling overwhelmed, not responding to messages)

What can I do if I notice I am struggling?

(Who can you talk to, and what can you do to help yourself? Think about who can help you as well as activities or actions you can do to help yourself)

3. 'Connecting In' Call Content – Key Information

SESSION 1 – Finding Hope in Hard Times

These guidelines support you to deliver the mentoring phone call: **Connecting In: Finding Hope in Hard Times**. You should refer to these guidelines alongside the **Call Guide: Finding Hope in Hard Times**.

Why offer this session? Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, families are under a kind of stress that many may not have ever experienced before. Even when times are tough, all parents have strengths they can build on with the right support. When parents thrive, they can give their children what they need to grow up healthy and safe.

Which families could benefit from this session?

This session is appropriate for all families. It is especially relevant for families who have been struggling to cope with the ongoing impact of the pandemic.

Helpful information to prepare you for the call:

Strengthening Families¹ is an approach that identifies **five protective factors** or strengths, that all families need:

- 1. Parental resilience:** Resilience is the ability to manage our reactions to stress and to function well even when bad things happen. Resilience is a skill we build throughout our lives—especially when we find ways to get through a challenge. Here are some ways that can help parents to build resilience:
 - Finding something to do to take care of themselves each day, so that they can take better care of everyone else who needs them.
 - Holding on to a sense of hope for the future, and believing that a better day is coming.
 - Checking in with each of their children to find out how they are feeling, what they are missing, or what made them laugh today.
 - Looking for moments of joy and encouragement, no matter how small. Noticing what people in the community are doing to help one another or ways they see their children growing.
 - If faith is a part of their lives, staying connected to their faith community.
- 2. Social Connections:** Families will find handling parenting challenges easier when they stay connected to family, friends and neighbours that they have positive relationships with. Maintaining social distance is needed to keep everyone safe, however there are ways in which connections can be maintained:
 - Through regular phone calls with friends, family, a support network.
 - Offering to help others for example helping isolated neighbours with shopping. During times of stress, it can be rewarding to help others. Children also appreciate opportunities to help others.

¹ This guidance is adapted from the guide produced by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, [Building Resilience in Troubled Times: A Guide for Parents](#) and gives more information on this topic

3. **Concrete Support:** Families will be facing challenges during this pandemic and may require extra support. Make sure that you are informed about where families can get that support locally:
 - Learn about the services that are available locally when families need help in your community.
 - Make sure you know who to contact if families need focussed support or interventions by trained medical or social workers.
 - Think about ways in which families and/or children can be linked in to network activities or programmes.

4. **Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development:** Understanding what a child needs and knowing what to expect as a child grows up makes the job of being a parent a lot easier. During this time of pandemic when regular routines have been disrupted and there is uncertainty, the following can help families cope:
 - When regular routines like going to school have been disrupted, daily routines are calming for both parents and children.
 - Make sure that parents are paying attention to their own feelings. What are their children doing that makes them feel good? What's most frustrating for them? What do children respond well to and what causes conflict?
 - Parents should talk to their children about how they are feeling. This is especially necessary if the family has lost a loved one, or are worried about someone who is very ill. Even young children can experience grief (this topic is covered more in Session 2 – Coping with Loss).

5. **Building a child's emotional and relational health:** As children grow, they have to learn how to manage their emotions; communicate what they are feeling and experiencing; and build healthy relationships with their peers and adults. That's harder when everyone is experiencing anxiety and stress. Some children will have greater difficulty managing their stress - and that can lead to negative behaviours like physical aggression or pulling away from loved ones. Helping children understand and express their feelings positively reduces tension now and builds communication skills they will need throughout life.
 - Young children build these skills mostly through practicing with their parents. Investing attention in them now will lead to more confident and competent children later.
 - Infants are sensitive to the stress levels of their parents and caregivers, and to disruption in their usual routines. Parents need to be as consistent and calm as they can.
 - Toddlers especially need lots of attention - parents should offer as much as they can, or they are likely to try and get attention in less positive ways. "30 hugs a day" is a great goal.
 - Ask children what they are concerned about. Let them talk about their fears, or about missing their friends and ask about what is going on in the world. Help them understand that their feelings are okay.

Connecting In

Which programmes could you connect families into from your church, project, organisation or network? Or are there external services or projects you could recommend to families (remember these must be approved by your supervisor)?

Use the table below to organise your locally available referral options:

Factors of Family Resilience	Our Programmes/ Activities
Parental Resilience	
Social connections	
Concrete Support	
Knowledge of parenting and child development	
Building children’s emotional and relational health	

You should agree these together with your supervisor before starting the mentoring calls on this theme.

SESSION 2 – Coping with Loss

*These guidelines support you to deliver the mentoring phone call: **Connecting In: Coping with Loss.** You should refer to these guidelines alongside the **Call Guide: Coping with Loss.***

Why offer this session?

This Mentoring Session is about helping families to cope with grief and loss. During COVID -19, we have all been touched by loss in different ways and some of the families you have been mentoring may have lost loved ones. This phone mentoring session is not designed to offer bereavement counselling but is designed primarily to help parents to communicate with children about grief and loss.

Which families could benefit from this session?

This session is appropriate for all families, as it covers loss and grief in general. It is especially relevant however for families who have lost a loved one during the pandemic.

Helpful information to prepare you for the call:

What is grief and how can children react?

Material for this session draws on guidance produced by the Global Protection Cluster and the MHPSS Collaborative for children and families in adversity, [Communicating with children about death, and helping children cope with grief](#). This resource has been adapted here, so you can refer to the original for more detailed information on this theme.

Grief is the name for the painful emotion we feel when someone we love or feel connected to dies. We can also grieve for other losses, for example being separated from our friends and family, our home or losing access to familiar places like school or the work place.

Practical suggestions to support children dealing with loss include talking to children openly and honestly, ensuring the child receives loving, consistent care, maintaining routines, giving children the right level of responsibility and taking care of yourself as a parent.

Useful answers to difficult questions:

Do Children Grieve? Yes, but their reactions to death will vary according to their age, their previous life experiences, their personality and the way life and death is understood within their culture.

The following information can help parents to understand how children of different ages experience loss and how parents can help them to cope with the death of a loved one during the pandemic:

Common expressions of grief:

- **0-2 years:** Any prolonged separation from a loved one is painful for an infant, they are likely to cry become withdrawn or angry. They cannot understand that death is final. The longer the separation, the greater the distress. They are likely to become more demanding and clingier with other caregivers.
- **3-5 Years:** Small children still do not understand that death is forever and may ask repeatedly if the loved person is coming back. They may have 'magical thinking' believing that something they did caused the death. They may behave like a younger child, becoming clingy or soiling and wetting themselves. Alternatively, some children may continue as if nothing had happened and appear not to care.
- **6-11 years:** Children begin to understand that death is forever, that the loved person cannot return, and that death can happen to anyone. They may worry that other loved family members and friends will die. They are increasingly curious and want to understand what happened, and can show concern for others. Physical aches and pains and anger are very common. Anger can be directed at the loved person who has died or the remaining caregiver. It can be expressed as challenging behaviour. In some cultures, boys may already be learning to hide their feelings
- **12-Adolescence:** Teenagers understand that death is irreversible, and happens to everyone, including themselves. They are interested in understanding why things happen, have a growing interest in abstract ideas like justice and injustice, and are sensitive to inconsistencies in any information given. At this age they are struggling with the conflicts between becoming an independent person who is making close friendships with their peers, while wanting to stay close to family members they love. Friendships with peers are very important and separation from and losses among their friends will also affect them. Their reactions vary greatly, ranging from "appearing not to care" to anger, or extreme sadness, poor concentration and a loss of interest in daily activities. They too can feel guilty, they might feel they have not done enough. Some teenagers will feel very responsible and wish to take on the adult role in the family following the death of a parent.

Should we tell children when someone they love has died? Yes. Do not hide the truth and do not delay telling the truth. It is natural to want to protect children from distress, but even very young children will be aware that something unusual is happening, the family are worried and upset, normal routines have changed and people are behaving differently. Not understanding what is happening causes more distress. If children are told lies to protect them, and then discover the truth later from someone else, they will distrust those who lied. All children, including those with physical and mental disabilities, need clear, honest, consistent explanations appropriate to their age and ability to understand, so that they can accept the reality of the loss. Telling your children the truth will increase their trust in you and help them cope better with the loss.

How might children react? There is no 'correct' way to grieve. There are likely to be changes in a child's:

- **Feelings:** they may feel sad, angry, numb, frightened, lonely, guilty, irritated, worried, confused, and show longing for the past. They may experience more than one feeling at the same time,

or feel and show nothing at all for long periods, and then suddenly feel overwhelmed by different emotions.

- **Thinking:** they may find themselves thinking constantly about what happened, going over the same events. They may find uncomfortable or frightening thoughts or image suddenly appear in their head without warning. They may think about the future and what is going to happen. They may become forgetful and distracted. They may find concentrating and paying attention to normal tasks like school work difficult. They may also have comforting images and thoughts and happy memories.
- **Behaviour:** children may become apathetic and not want to do anything at all. They may withdraw and isolate themselves. Or, they may carry on with their normal activities as if nothing unusual had happened. They may 'act out': getting into physical and verbal fights, being naughty or deliberately provocative. They may behave like a much younger child: thumb sucking, bed wetting, demanding that you stay close. They may engage in 'repetitive play', repeatedly acting out an upsetting experience, for example: Daddy going to the hospital.
- **Physical state:** children often have less appetite and difficulty falling or staying sleep. They may have nightmares. They may suffer from unexplained aches and pains. All these reactions vary greatly, between children and within the same child over time, sometimes changing rapidly over the course of a day. At one point a child may be busy with their normal activities, and at the next start weeping or become very angry. This can happen repeatedly.

How long does grief last? Grief can continue for a long time when life circumstances are challenging. It can also return unannounced months after a child has appeared to forget or recover. It may be triggered by a reminder, such as an anniversary, or a favourite activity that the child did with the lost person. All these reactions are natural. However, in a very small number of children the reactions may be intense and prolonged and very disruptive of daily life. Or occasionally a child may express suicidal thoughts, or behaviours such as harming themselves others. In these cases, do not hesitate to seek extra help from a health worker in your community.

How can we help children cope with grief? One of the most important ways all of us, both adults and children, come to terms with losing a loved one is through Mourning. Although different cultures and religions mourn in different ways, all mourning processes include ways for accepting the death, celebrating the life of the dead person and making it significant, saying goodbye, and continuing attention towards the dead, while moving beyond it and making a new start. It is very important to give sufficient time to mourning and not try to hurry the process, even in these difficult times.

How do we help children to feel better and protect their mental health? The loss of a loved relative can be deeply upsetting for a child, especially at the moment when it is also accompanied by the loss of normal structures and routines of daily life. The most important things to do are to ensure that:

- The child receives loving, consistent care from a parent, relative or carer, whom they trust and know well.
- Infants and young children are given security through loving physical contact, singing, cuddling and rocking.
- Normal life routines and structure are maintained as much as is possible. So even if confined to a limited space it is important to have a regular pattern to the day with allocated tasks and times for activities, such as cleaning the space, doing school work, getting exercise and having time to play.
- Challenging and/or regressive behaviour is understood and the child is not punished.
- Other children in the child's life, at school or in friendship circles, are informed (through their teachers or parents) as to what has happened, so that they can support the child.
- The children are given the opportunity to help you, but are not pushed to take on adult roles and responsibilities beyond their capacity.

It is important that caregivers take care of their own physical and mental wellbeing, since they will also be grieving. It can be hard to support a child while dealing with their own feelings, especially in a confined place. That is why it is very important that they take time for themselves and take care of themselves. They cannot help their children if they are unwell themselves. It is vital to get sufficient sleep, eat properly, exercise, take time to relax and also have someone to whom they can turn to for emotional support. Try to avoid harmful practices such as increased alcohol or tobacco consumption.

Throughout both conversations, remember that this may be a difficult topic to talk about, and at any point the parent or child can feel free not to answer or to end the conversation or change the subject. Explain to the parent that your role as a mentor is to create a safe space to begin to talk about this topic and think about some practical ideas, but that if there is a need for additional help, you may need to connect them with further support, such as counselling.

Connecting In

Which programmes could you connect families into from your church, project, organisation or network? Or are there external services or projects you could recommend to families (remember these must be approved by your supervisor)?

You should agree these together with your supervisor before starting the mentoring calls on this theme.

SESSION 3 – Staying Safe Under Pressure

*These guidelines support you to deliver the mentoring phone call: **Connecting In: Staying Safe under Pressure**. You should refer to these guidelines alongside the **Call Guide: Staying Safe under Pressure**.*

Why offer this session? This session looks at how families can minimise some of the key child protection risks emerging from the pressures of the pandemic. When families are struggling with finance, stress and social pressure, they may resort to negative coping strategies such as child labour, trafficking or early marriage – this session helps to raise awareness of these risks and supports families to think through other options that are not harmful for the child.

Which families could benefit from this session?

This session is appropriate for all families, as these risks could apply in all communities. It is particularly relevant for communities where you are aware that any of these child protection issues are an emerging risk.

Helpful information to prepare you for the call:

The call looks at protection issues including child labour, early marriage and trafficking. These issues are covered in general terms only in the call, and you should avoid asking for specific details from the family, as the goal is to raise awareness, rather than identify protection concerns. However, if any protection concerns are raised, you should be ready to report these to your supervisor and follow the reporting and referral procedure you will confirm during this training session.

- **Child labour** is any work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity. Child labour is work that interferes with children's education and negatively affects their emotional, developmental and physical well-being. Many child labourers are engaged

in the worst forms of child labour (WFCL), including forced labour, recruitment into armed groups, trafficking for exploitation, sexual exploitation, illicit work or hazardous work. Humanitarian crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic can increase the prevalence and severity of existing forms of child labour or trigger new forms.²

- **Trafficking** of a child is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation, and so it is often linked to child labour. Trafficking is often presented as an opportunity for a child to travel to a different location (such as going to the city, or across a border) to support their family by earning extra income, or to work for and be taken care of by an employer.
- **Early marriage** is any formal marriage or informal union where one or both people are under 18 years old. A forced marriage is where one or both people do not consent to the marriage and pressure or abuse is used.

As you will remember from the first phase of the mentoring programme, a reporting and referral procedure is a key element of the mentoring programme. Below are some key points from the original **Guidelines for Mentors** document – see that document to remind yourself of more details.

Do	DO NOT
<p>Be aware of potential signs of tensions or abuse at home (e.g. relatives or partners in the background shouting or taking the phone from the respondent.)</p>	<p>Do not ignore if the respondent over the phone seems to be in an unhealthy environment. There is a need to be reassuring with the person and cautious that the communication does not worsen the situation. Do not proactively try to identify abuse survivors but be available in case someone asks for support.</p>
<p>If it seems that the child and/or adult might be in an abusive situation at home Make time to talk and listen and to acknowledge their feelings and follow the recommendations above. Provide them with information about COVID-19 and child protection and referral pathways. Ask if s/he wants you to call back for follow up. If you think a child is at risk of serious abuses, report to the safeguarding focal point.</p>	<p>If it seems that the child or an adult might be in an abusive situation at home Do not ask them about what happened, do not be intrusive. Do not bring up the topic of abuse and violence directly as someone might be listening to the conversation and you might not be able to do much if things get out of hand.</p>

As you will remember, the mentoring phone call is not seeking to uncover or detect cases of abuse, since this could put the mentee at risk and also puts the mentor in a difficult position. However, where a case of abuse or a child protection issue is revealed in the course of the conversation, it is important that this is not ignored, and is reported to your supervisor or child protection officer or focal point following your network or organisation’s child protection policy.

While this session tries hard to avoid asking the mentee to talk directly about cases of abuse and is more focused on raising awareness and developing positive coping strategies, it is possible that in talking about these topics, a child or parent may share something that you will need to report.

² Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, 2019

It is therefore important that you are clear about what the **reporting and referral procedure** is for your organisation or network. **Take time to clarify this together before carrying out the phone mentoring session.**

Connecting In

Which programmes could you connect families into from your church, project, organisation or network? Or are there external services or projects you could recommend to families (remember these must be approved by your supervisor)?

You should agree these together with your supervisor before starting the mentoring calls on this theme.

4. Getting Started

Each theme encourages you to work with the family to identify ways they could be integrated into your organisation, church or network’s existing programmes, or connected with external support, so that the family can receive ongoing support beyond the mentoring programme. Make sure you feel confident that you could make suggestions to the family of where they could get additional help and support after each call.

It is important to keep a note of which families you have referred to which services. This will help you to report back to your supervisor and track the support you have given as well as if families were able to connect with those you suggested. Here is an example of a table you could create.

Family ID (<i>given to you by your project supervisor</i>)	Call theme	Who I referred them to
<i>e.g. 15</i>	<i>e.g. Finding Hope in Hard Times</i>	<i>e.g. Counselling services at Better Help</i>

This guide should be a useful reference for you throughout your time as a mentor and after reading it you should be more confident to start talking to families about these themes. If you have any questions, feel free to contact your supervisor. Thank you for helping families deal with these challenging topics and for giving them the chance to receive further support.