

LIVING THROUGH LOSS COUNSELLING SOCIETY OF BC

#201 – 1847 West Broadway
Vancouver, BC V6J 1Y6

Fax: 604-873-5002

PHONE: 604-873-5013

Email: ltlc@sprint.ca

CHILDREN AND LOSS

PARENT CAN HELP A CHILD COPE WITH SEPARATION AND DIVORCE

Divorce or separation can be a painful time for both adults and children. Children, however, are remarkably resilient and can survive the emotional upheaval with few permanent psychological scars if they are supported during their adjustment to a new lifestyle.

Here are some suggestions that may help parents with their children through this period of change.

1. Try to provide an atmosphere that is safe, secure, and loving, one in which children can feel comfortable to ask questions; then be honest with your answers (only give them details they can understand).
2. Reassure your children that both of you still love them regardless of the new living arrangements.
3. Children need to know that they are not responsible for the separation.
4. Research indicates one of the most painful things for children during this transition period is hearing the other parent blamed or criticized. Even after a divorce both parents are the most important male/female models of relationships for children.
5. If at all possible try to support children as co-parents. During the trauma two loving parents can make a great deal of difference in how the change is perceived.
6. Explain to children what plans have been made for the future. Most children are very concerned with the questions:

“What will happen to me?”
“Who will be there to take care of me?” and
“What if something happens to you?”.
7. Children usually express feelings in behavior rather than words; be observant of their behavior, it will help you to provide emotional support yourself for them or to seek outside help.
8. Model for your children that it is okay to have and express feelings of grief around the changes in their lives.