



St Luke's
Hospice Plymouth



Patches

Pre-bereavement support for children
and young people at St Luke's.



www.stlukes-hospice.org.uk/patches



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I was so worried for my kids coming into the hospice, but they really engaged with Lisa and Patches - it even made me think about my own memories of my Dad... I could relate to them easier after that.

Kyle, Plymouth

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Pre-bereavement support for children

We recognise that preparing a child or teenager for the death of a parent or other loved one is a daunting and heartbreaking task, and we don't want you to face this alone. Involving children and teenagers, talking to them and allowing them to express their feelings concerning death will help them to understand and work through their fears.

At this most vulnerable of times, St Luke's provides specialist help for those with young children and teenagers, ensuring you feel supported as your family navigates its way through the challenges you face following a loved one's terminal diagnosis.

How might my child be feeling?

It is always difficult to prepare children for the painful reality that someone they love is going to die, and they often react to emotional distress in a different way to adults. Very often, they will sense something is wrong before they are told and can feel fearful and isolated.

Children's feelings are likely to change suddenly – one minute they might be very tearful, the next wanting to play. It is also normal for them to display anger.

What support do you offer?

Our dedicated Patches Family and Children's Support Worker is available to come alongside your family, spending time getting to know you to understand your particular circumstances. Taking this time means that together you can develop tailored support to help your children understand what is happening in a way that is most appropriate for them.

What can I expect?

Our Support Worker will contact you to listen and answer your questions, and explain the help and support available to you as you face preparing your children for the various stages of the end of your loved one's life.

For example, this could include:

- Advice about the timing of talking with your children about the terminal diagnosis
- Guidance on planning what to say to help them know what to expect
- Suggestions for creating an environment where children feel safe to ask questions
- Ideas for activities that will help your family create lasting positive memories

In addition, we can provide a range of hands-on play, activities and arts and crafts for children that will help them express their feelings, from writing a letter to their loved one to creating a memory box or planning a memory day.

Patches and friends

St Luke's has also produced an activity book and range of materials children can use on their own, or with family and friends.



Featuring a fun character, a Koi fish named Patches, based on the popular koi pond at our specialist unit in Turnchapel, these activities can help your child make sense of what is happening. They include activities such as quizzes, games, and activities that help promote the value of the memories each child has with their loved ones.

The activity book and all publications are free to patients referred to St Luke's. Ask your Support Worker for more information.

How can I access this support?

It is best to seek support at an early stage. This support from St Luke's is available to those who have been referred to us by a GP or other health or social care professional. If you would like to be referred or need further information on how to do this, please contact us.



 **01752 401172**

 **stlukes-hospice.org.uk/patches**

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