

## Managing Mothers' Day

As Mother's Day approaches, shops and adverts are full of cards and gift ideas and images of happy mums and children. But if your mother has died this time of year can bring an even greater sense of loss. We thought it might be useful to share some of the things families have told us about what is difficult for them and what helps them to manage Mothers' day.

Some of the families found that continuing with family traditions was comforting and provided a sense of continuity but others found that it was too hard and wanted to do something completely different. Some wanted to be with other people and some wanted to be private and on their own. Here's what they say:

What has been difficult?

- The first Mother's Day - I usually went with my children to buy flowers for mum and we made her breakfast in bed.
- Other members of the family invited us round - but we didn't want to bring them down with sadness as they all celebrated the day. We decided to visit mum's grave with flowers and leave cards the children had written.
- We used to go out for lunch on Mother's Day - we tried this for the first year but it was so hard seeing everyone else with their mum at the table. Since then we have a quiet time together and go for a walk in the woods with marshmallows and a flask of hot chocolate.

What has been helpful for you?

- Not expecting too much of ourselves - and not accepting invitations just to please others or shows we are 'OK.'
- I talked with the children before Mother's Day and we talked about what we would like to do. We couldn't pretend Mother's Day wasn't happening so decided to visit her grave and have time to think about her before going on an active cycle ride.
- I cooked Sunday lunch at home with the kids - we talked about mum all the time and agreed she did a much better job. We were able to laugh too about my lumpy gravy! And then we drew the curtains and snuggled down together to watch a film on TV.
- For the first year we tried not to make a 'big thing' of Mother's Day - in some ways it's just another day without mum and we had a very quiet day at home. The second year, we felt able to be with others in the family and we had a wonderful time looking at pictures and DVDs.

We hope that this may be useful to help you and your children to start a conversation about what your Mothers' day might involve. There is no right or wrong way just what works best for your family.