

How to help your camper

Take A Pause

We know you are juggling a million things right now and we are all used to multi-tasking but at this moment your child needs you to focus on them. A few minutes of undivided attention can have an immense impact. Pause what you are doing, turn off your phone, television and screens, find a quiet space and truly be with them.

Let them Lead

Ask your child what they need from you, let them take the lead. This will help them feel a sense of control and also know that you are there for support.

Give them Space

Give them space and time to express their thoughts and feelings and to grieve this loss. Children and teenagers process and react in many different ways and at different rates. Reacting to grief is not linear, a child who is happy one moment can be crying the next.

Resist the Urge

Resist the urge to brush off their feelings, or to tell them it's going to be ok. Just be with them for now.

Resist the urge to compare the loss of Camp to greater losses; this will only serve to invalidate their feelings. We know that there are greater losses and struggles, but being reminded of this will not help your child at this time.

Resist the urge to tell them they have so much to be grateful for. Although being grateful is certainly important, it is also important to allow your child to be in this moment for a bit.

Allow the Feelings

Allow your child to have their feelings, let them cry, be angry, be quiet, and then let them cry some more. Allowing our children to express with feelings can be hard for parents, we tend to want to reassure and fix. However, affirming that this is an appropriate reaction will help them begin to process and heal.

Just Listen

While we as parents may also be experiencing many feelings about Camp being canceled, it is important that we allow our children to express what is on their minds and in their hearts.

Be Patient

Give them time to process. Some kids may need more time to understand. Some might be angry with Camp; allow them to feel mad, this is part of the grieving process. Be careful not to add your own feelings to theirs. Be patient, they will gain their equilibrium soon.

Encourage Connection

Encourage your child to connect with their Camp friends, to reach out to others and not wait for others to call. Supporting, and feeling supported by another person, can help them feel a sense of control over a situation in which they have little control.

When ready, encourage your child to think about ways in which they can support others in the community, this is a great time to display compassion.

Based on Your Child's Age

For elementary school-aged children, be the director: You need a plan of what to say and how to say it. Anticipate what questions your children might have and what responses you might give. It is fine to help your child label their feelings, if you feel confident that you are labeling those feelings correctly.

For middle school-aged children, be the tour guide: You need to lead but also be ready to change course, depending on your child's response and tolerance for the conversation. Middle schoolers may be interested in talking about the situation all at once or may need time to process and then revisit.

For high school-aged children, be the torch-passer: More is less with this age, so share the information and then pass the torch to your children to let them lead the conversation while you listen. Your teens may want to talk with their friends before they talk with you. Encourage them to reach out to their camp friends for support.

Contact Us

We're here for you. Please email us at info@tannadoonah.org or call us at 574-387-6095.

