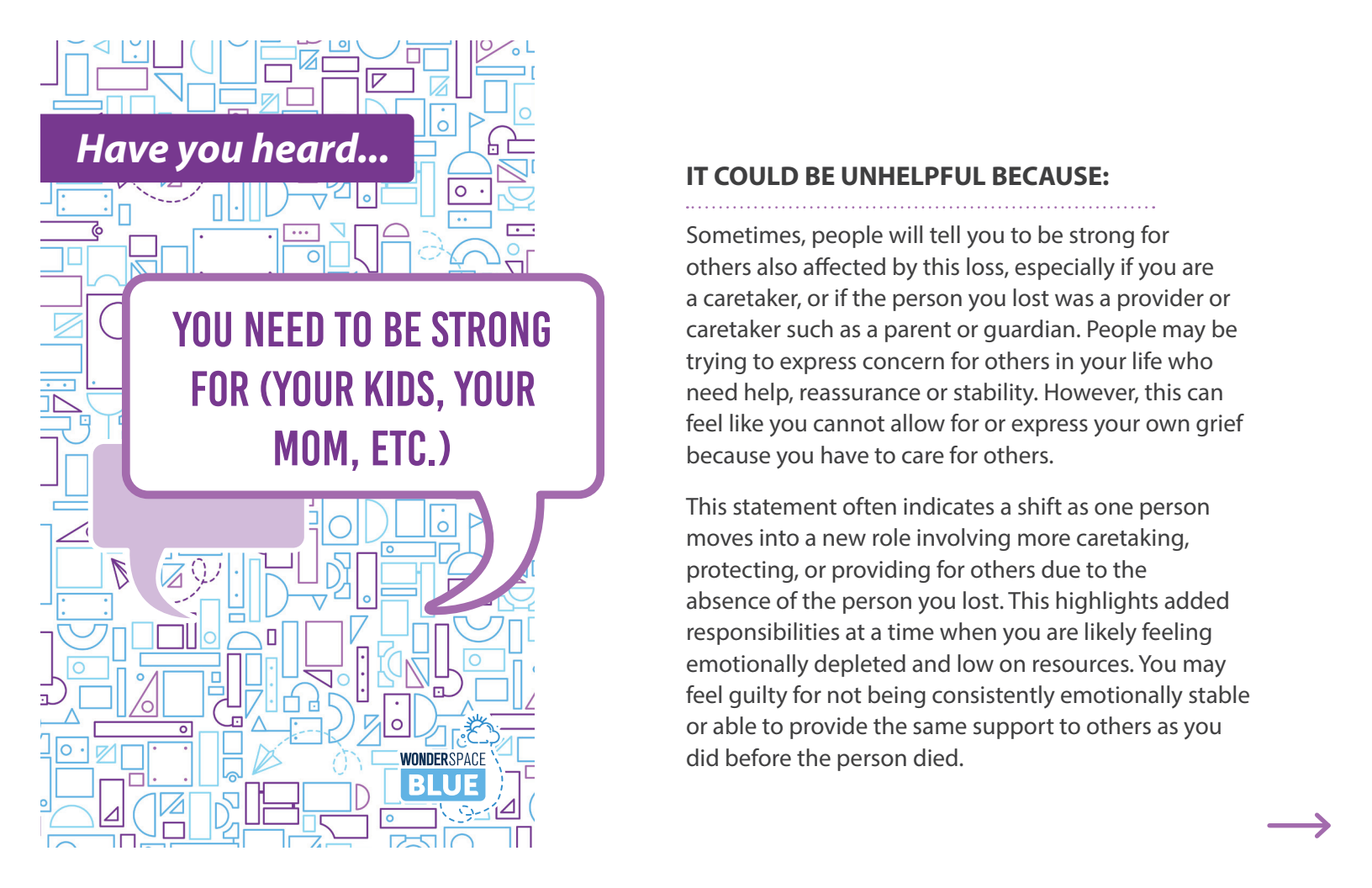




Have you heard...

**YOU NEED TO BE STRONG
FOR (YOUR KIDS, YOUR
MOM, ETC.)**

WONDERSPACE
BLUE

IT COULD BE UNHELPFUL BECAUSE:

Sometimes, people will tell you to be strong for others also affected by this loss, especially if you are a caretaker, or if the person you lost was a provider or caretaker such as a parent or guardian. People may be trying to express concern for others in your life who need help, reassurance or stability. However, this can feel like you cannot allow for or express your own grief because you have to care for others.

This statement often indicates a shift as one person moves into a new role involving more caretaking, protecting, or providing for others due to the absence of the person you lost. This highlights added responsibilities at a time when you are likely feeling emotionally depleted and low on resources. You may feel guilty for not being consistently emotionally stable or able to provide the same support to others as you did before the person died.





Regardless of your role or responsibilities, you have experienced a loss and need space, time and support to grieve. Showing emotions, even if they are more intense than others may have seen before, normalizes grief for others, especially children or teens. Telling others that it is okay to express emotion is good, but demonstrating that it is okay is often more effective.

The person you lost had many responsibilities and ways they met needs. Some of these spaces will need to be filled immediately, and some might feel out of the ordinary because of your loss. Because you may feel depleted and overwhelmed, it's important to ask for help and consider if your support system needs to grow in order to help you manage the role changes you are experiencing. Some needs may be prioritized and others delayed. There may also be times that you refrain from certain activities, or leave intentional space to honor the person who died, such as leaving a chair open at a wedding rather than asking someone to fill in for a family member.

You could say:

- **"Sometimes people might tell you that you need to be strong for me, or for other adults, because we are grieving too."** I feel sad, angry, and lots of other emotions, because that is part of grief. You might see me feeling things that you aren't used to. Even though it's hard, it's okay for me to feel those things. It's not your job to fix those feelings. If my feelings get too strong or I need help I can go to other adults, like friends, counselors, or pastors for support.
- **"The person we lost was really important, and he/she did some things in our family that no one else did."** What can you think of that our person did for us? Since he/she can't do those things now, are there any other people we can ask for help? What would you like them to do to support you?
- **"Sometimes when someone dies, the jobs in a family change."** Maybe one parent used to work full time while the other parent stayed home, or maybe someone always dropped you off at school, and now they can't. When someone dies, other people have to step up and do those things. Our family routine will change because we all have new things we have to do. Here are the changes I know about (list them). Are there other things you think will change, or are worried won't get taken care of? How can we make sure those things still get done?