

## Supporting a Bereaved Young Person Parent/Carer Pack

### Useful Websites and links:

Winston's Wish: <https://www.winstonswish.org>

Child Bereavement UK: <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>

Young Minds A parent's guide to grief and loss <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/grief-and-loss/>

Making a memory box video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hep96IZyL\\_E](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hep96IZyL_E)

Help is at hand – Support After Suicide NHS booklet  
<https://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Suicide/Documents/Help%20is%20at%20Hand.pdf>

### Helpline and email support

For advice and guidance on supporting children and young people affected by all types of bereavement. Helplines can be a useful place for you to talk through your thoughts and feelings about supporting your child.



Winston's Wish:  
08088 020 021. 8am and 8pm, Monday to Friday. Free to call.  
[ask@winstonswish.org](mailto:ask@winstonswish.org)  
Ring helpline for relevant publications sent to you free of charge.



Child Bereavement UK:  
0800 02 888 40. 9am – 5pm, Monday to Friday, except Bank Holidays.  
[helpline@childbereavementuk.org](mailto:helpline@childbereavementuk.org) and live webchat on website.

### Support for you

If you're affected by the bereavement, it is important that you also look after yourself. These are places where you can find support for yourself.

Cruse Bereavement support: <https://www.cruse.org.uk/> Helpline 0808 808 1677.

At a loss: Bereavement signposting service <https://www.ataloss.org/>.

WAY: Peer to peer support network for anyone who loses a partner before their 51<sup>st</sup> birthday.  
<https://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk/>

## Taken from Young Minds: A Guide for Parents: Grief and Loss

### How do young people respond to loss?

Every child and young person will react to, feel and express loss differently, and this will change over time. There is no right or wrong way for a young person to grieve.

Children and young people who have gone through a significant loss can feel:

- anxious or worried, including about their own health or the health of people close to them
- frightened about losing other people they love
- sad, low or withdrawn
- isolated or lonely
- angry or irritable
- guilty
- numb
- physically unwell
- unable to concentrate
- unable to sleep
- that their moods change quickly
- that they cannot accept the situation
- that they are struggling to cope

It's helpful to remember that it is normal for your child to feel and experience these things after a loss, particularly if they have lost someone they were close to.

### How can I support my child?

- ① Encourage your child to find ways of expressing their feelings
- ① Support your child to say goodbye
- ① Talk with them about other ways they can celebrate the person
- ① Spend quality time with your child doing things they enjoy
- ① Encourage them to keep doing their activities and hobbies
- ① Give older children and teenagers space to be alone or chat to their friends
- ① Talk about the person who has died or been lost and share your memories together
- ① Reach out to your child's school to let them know what's happened

## How can I talk to my child about loss?

### 💡 Explain what's happened and discuss what it means ^

Explain to your child in an age-appropriate way what's happened, and offer opportunities to think together about what it means.

### 💡 Use clear language ^

Use clear language if you're talking about death. We can find it difficult to say the words 'died' or 'dead' and might want to use softer expressions such as 'gone to sleep' or 'passed on'. These expressions can be confusing for younger children, as they may believe the person will come back or become fearful of falling asleep themselves.

### 💡 It's okay not to have all the answers ^

Remember that it's okay not to have all the answers and to say you don't know. Be guided by your child's questions – these will let you know what they are curious or uncertain about.

### 💡 Validate their feelings ^

Let them know that it's okay to feel however they feel, whether that's sad, overwhelmed, angry, worried or something else – and that there's no right or wrong way to grieve. Whatever their emotional response, try not to take it personally.

### 💡 Listen to how they're feeling ^

Be curious, empathetic and non-judgmental about how they're feeling, focusing on listening and providing emotional support. You won't be able to make it all better, but being there makes a huge difference.

### 💡 Reassure them that you love them ^

Reassure them that you love them, they're not alone and they can talk to you whenever they need to.

### 💡 Make sure they don't blame themselves ^

If your child lets you know that they're blaming themselves, or you're worried they might be, reassure them that guilt is a common thing to feel after a loss – but that it is in no way their fault or responsibility.

## Tips for starting a difficult conversation

If your child finds it difficult to talk, it might help to start a conversation while doing an activity. You can find our activity ideas [here](#).

Especially with older children and teenagers, it's okay to give them some space if they don't want to talk. Sometimes it helps to just sit together quietly, or to offer a hand squeeze or gentle hug. Make sure they know you are there for them, and that it's okay for them to open up to a relative, family friend or someone else they trust if they want to.

Alongside talking to your child, it might help for you to speak to someone you trust about your own feelings of grief and the impact the situation is having on you. This can help to create the head space you need to be there for your child.

[Tips for starting a conversation with your child >](#)