Bereavement Support

Information for Parents and Carers

Thank you for taking the time to look at our bereavement support presentation.

You may be reading this because you, your child or someone you know have experienced a bereavement and would like some support.

At Allerton High we take the welfare of our children and families very seriously and actively promote supportive, reciprocal relationships between home and school.

As adults, we are often faced with the harsh realities of death and it can be difficult to support our loved ones through their grief when we are navigating our own feelings of loss.

I have worked at Allerton High for almost 18 years, and a significant part of my role in school is to support our children and families when they are faced with all aspects of grief and loss. I have a masters degree in child and family welfare practice, with a particular research focus on death, dying and bereavement, and how this impacts the family dynamic. I am currently undertaking PhD research into grief narratives with children and young people. In addition to this, I have completed extensive professional training in supporting children and young people with bereavement, including anticipated loss, trauma and suicide.

The following slides contain information that you may find helpful. Please contact me if you or your child have experienced a bereavement, or are sadly anticipating a death and would like advice on how we can support you and your family during this difficult time.

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Year 7 Pastoral Manager, Senior Safeguarding and Child Protection Officer and Lead Bereavement Practitioner

Anticipated Death

- When death is expected, for example due to terminal illness or a life-limiting condition, planning and preparation for the loss can make the response to grief positive and uncomplicated.
- As adults, our instinct is to protect children and we may shy away from chats that are potentially upsetting
- Involving children in plans for end of life care and being very open that death will occur is an important aspect of preparing for the death of a loved one
- Anticipatory grief is a type of grief that occurs whilst the dying person is still alive; it is a means of rationalising the practicalities of the impending loss and can be experienced by all members of the family, including the dying person, to varying degrees

Sudden or Unexpected Death

- Sudden or unexpected death provokes a very different grief response to death that is expected
- The means by which death is considered sudden or unexpected includes fatal accident, murder/manslaughter and suicide.
- The death is inevitably shocking and responses include extremes of anger, confusion, guilt and distress
- Children who experience sudden or unexpected death in their family or peer group will have many questions and likely seek a source of blame to make sense of the loss
- Traumatic bereavements that occur suddenly or unexpectedly need to be addressed honestly and openly, answering questions frankly but with sensitivity where possible. If you cannot answer a question, be honest and say you do not know the answer.

A note about ‘proxy grief’

- Sometimes, we can grieve for people we didn’t know personally. This can be a response to the death of a person in the community or a relative of a friend for example. This is known as ‘proxy grief’.
- This is a genuine grief reaction and should be acknowledged as such. Children and young people can find news of a death extremely challenging even if there was not a close relationship with the person.
- Try to acknowledge the emotional challenges this brings for yourself and/ or your child; it is not silly to feel shocked or upset by the death of another person.

What Children Need from Adults

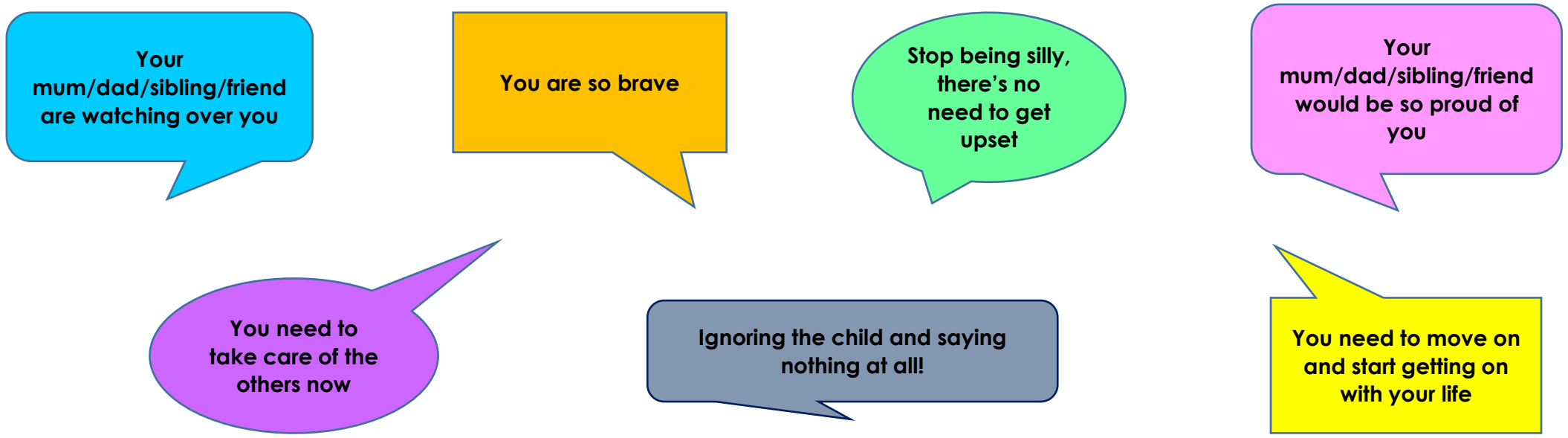
1. Age appropriate information
2. Their fears and anxieties addressed
3. Reassurance they are not to blame or in any way responsible for what happened
4. Help with expressing overwhelming feelings
5. Validation of individual feelings irrespective of the closeness of the relationship with the deceased person
6. Careful listening and watching
7. Involvement and inclusion in activities
8. Continued structure and routine
9. Modelled grief behaviours e.g. seeing us acknowledge our grief in our own way
10. Opportunities to remember

Helpful Responses to Grief

- Sometimes, it is not always straightforward responding to a child's grief especially if the deceased person is not well known to you. Below are some of the things you could say to the children when discussing loss and bereavement, however these are not prescriptive and can be tailored to specific contexts.

Unhelpful Responses to Grief

- Sometimes, our own behaviours and choice of words can have the opposite effect to what we are intending. When we try to relate to the child's loss, be overly positive or 'play down' the bereavement so as not to say anything upsetting, some of the things we say with the best intentions can be interpreted in a profoundly negative way. Below are some examples of unhelpful responses to grief.



WINSTON'S WISH

We support grieving children and young people after the death of someone important.

Giving hope to grieving children

08088 020 021

Call us between 9am-5pm, Monday-Friday. Calls are free and confidential.

ask@winstonswish.

Email us or fill out the contact form - we'll aim to reply within two working days.

[Email and live chat contact form]

Live chat

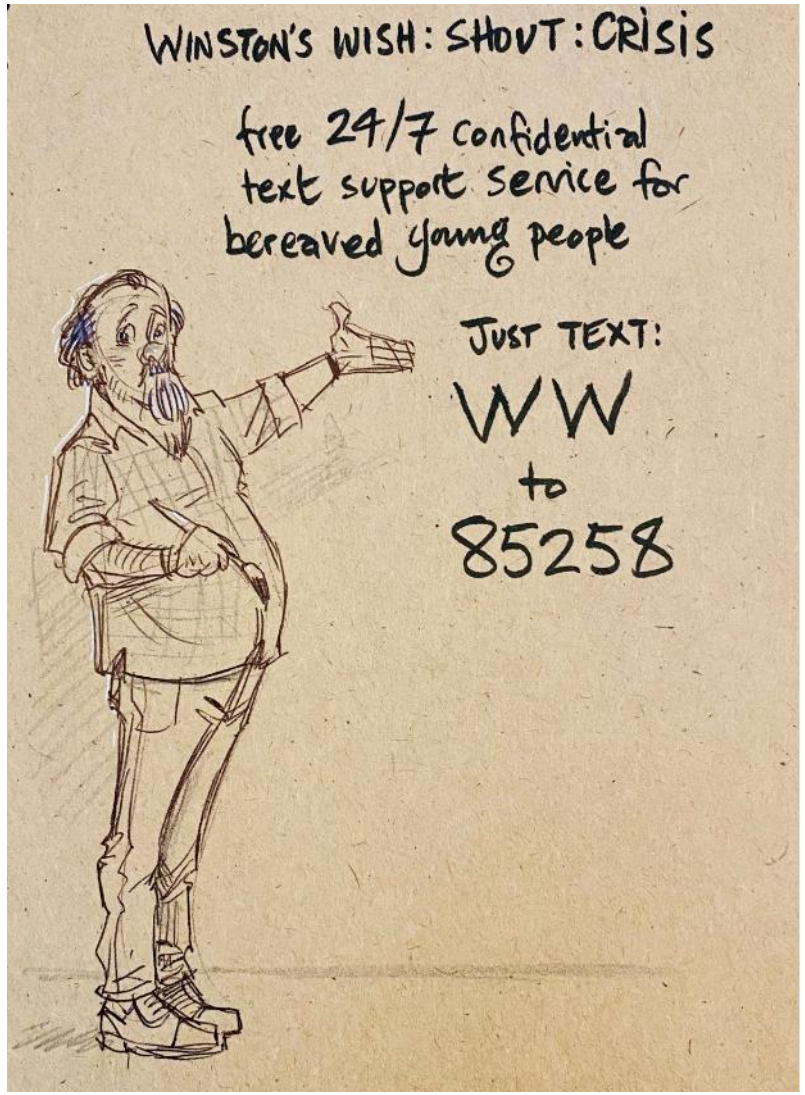
Chat with us between 3-8pm, Monday to Friday by clicking the blue 'Chat with us' button at the bottom of your screen. We are using a new live chat system so please bear with us while we perfect it. If live chat is unavailable, you can call or email us or fill out our contact form

WINSTON'S WISH

Crisis Messenger

If you're experiencing a personal crisis and need support, text **WW** to **85258**.

A trained volunteer will introduce themselves, reflect on what you've said, and invite you to share how you are feeling. You'll text each other, only sharing what you feel comfortable with. By asking questions, listening to you and responding with support, they will help you sort through your feelings until you both feel you are now in a calm, safe place. They might also signpost you to other services that can provide you with further help, so that you can continue to get support.



Child Bereavement UK

REBUILDING LIVES TOGETHER

We support young people up to the age of 25 when someone important to them has died or is not expected to live.

We offer free, confidential bereavement support for individuals, couples and families, by telephone, video or instant messenger, wherever you live in the UK. We also offer face-to-face support from a number of locations.

Call our Helpline

0800 02 888 40

Cruse Bereavement Support

How does it feel to lose a parent, a partner or a friend? How does the relationship to the person who died affect your grief?

[Understanding grief - Grief experiences]

Speak to us via CruseChat

Chat online with expert grief counsellors.

[CruseChat | Chat online with a grief counsellor]

Follow us on social

Find a community of people who are grieving. Share stories and connect.

- Join us on Facebook
- Connect with us on Instagram
- Talk to us on Twitter

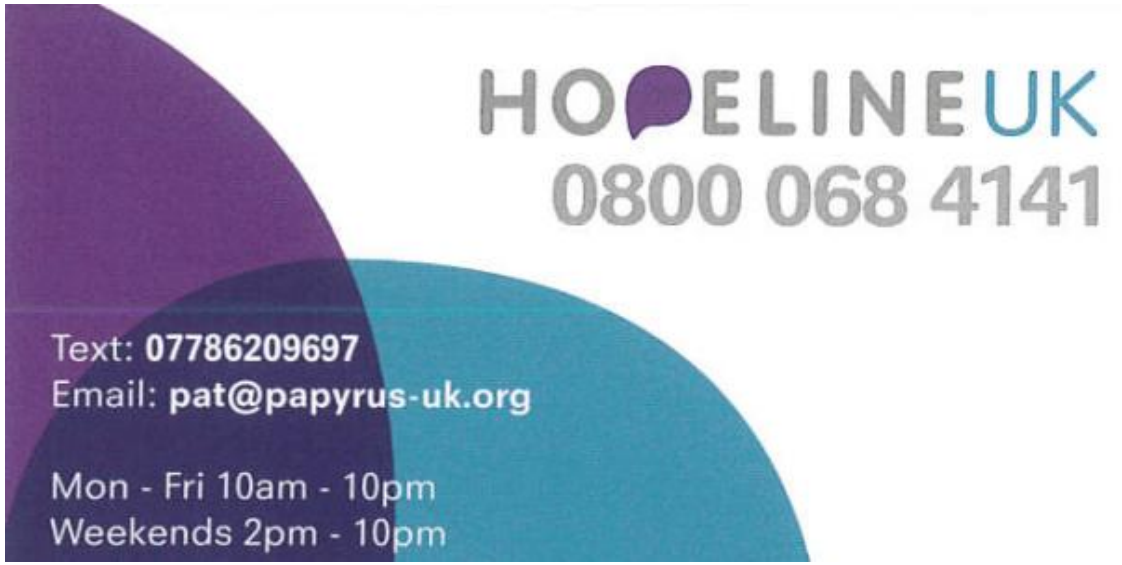
Call Our Helpline

Our volunteers are trained in all types of bereavement and can help you make sense of how you're feeling right now.

0808 808 1677

PAPYRUS

PREVENTION OF YOUNG SUICIDE



HOPELINEUK text and email services are…

- A useful stepping stone for those who are worried about talking to someone or those who have never shared their thoughts of suicide before.
- Especially useful if people cannot talk due to their environment.
- Beneficial to those who are non-verbal or have difficulty hearing. We ensure that support can be provided to everyone.
- A way for people to feel empowered to take control of these thoughts of suicide and to reach out for the long-term support that they deserve.

Coping with the pain and heartache of a close bereavement is always difficult – not least when it's accompanied by a sense of loneliness and a feeling that no one understands.

We want to help those who are living with loss to discover hope for the future, and the strength to rebuild their lives and the lives of their families.

Care for the Family provide bereavement support for:

- Bereaved siblings
- Bereaved parents
- Young widows

Call us on 029 2081 0800

MISCARRIAGE ASSOCIATION

The knowledge to help

The Miscarriage Association is here to provide support and information to anyone affected by miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy or molar pregnancy.

- If this is happening now, happened recently or happened long ago
- If you are worried about signs or symptoms – or the lack of them
- If you are 'in limbo', waiting for another scan or for test results
- If you are concerned for someone else

In all these cases, we aim to be of help.

Pregnancy loss phone helpline
You can call us: 01924 200799.

Live chat
Live Chat is our free, confidential online chat service, which you can find at the bottom right of your screen. This service is usually available from 10am-3pm Monday to Friday.

Pregnancy loss email helpline
You can email us: info@miscarriageassociation.org.uk.
You might not feel able to talk on the phone – or perhaps you aren't able to call during our office hours. We also provide information and offer support via email and aim to reply the same or the next working day.

Are you dealing with any type of pet loss?

We are here to support you

Call us on 0800 096 6606

or chat online through our webchat service at bluecross.org.uk/about-pbss

or email pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk

Support lines are open everyday from 8.30am – 8.30pm.

PET BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SERVICE

Registered charity no: 224392 (England and Wales), SC040154 (Scotland).

BLUE CROSS FOR PETS

Models of grief

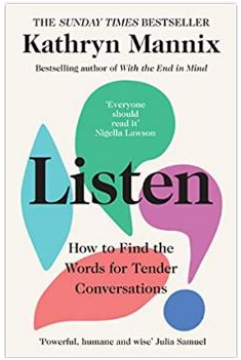
The Dual-Process Model of Grief (Stroebe and Schut, 2001)

The dual-process model describes the oscillation between feelings of loss and normality, coping and avoidance. This can happen many times in a single day and is a means of coping with bereavement.

Growing around Grief (Tonkin, 1996)

Tonkin's model is based on experiences of grief not diminishing but staying the same over time. Individual experiences and events across the life span mean our personal perceptions of grief are not as present as they once were as time goes on; the grief remains as it always has but it does not occupy our thoughts continuously.

Recommended reading



Listen. How to Find the Words for Tender Conversations

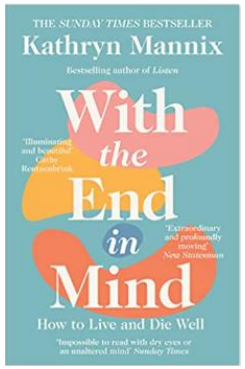
Dr Katherine Mannix (2022)

Available from: Listen

The Adult Orphan Club: How I Learned to Grieve the Loss of My Parents

Flora Baker (2020)

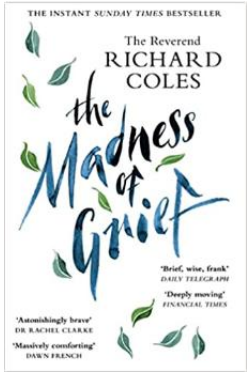
Available from: The Adult Orphan Club



With the End in Mind. How to Live and Die Well

Dr Katherine Mannix (2022)

Available from: With the End in Mind: How to Live and Die Well



The Madness of Grief: A Memoir of Love and Loss

The Reverend Richard Coles (2022)

Available from: The Madness of Grief

Quick links

- Child Bereavement UK Supporting bereaved children and young people
- Suicide Bereavement UK Suicide Bereavement Support
- Leeds Suicide Bereavement ServiceAbout Us – Leeds Suicide Bereavement Service
- Winston's Wish Supporting A Bereaved Child | Winston's Wish Bereavement Service
- Cruse Bereavement Support Home - Cruse Bereavement Support
- Mind Helping someone who is experiencing grief - Mind
- Young Minds grief-and-loss-created-june-2020.pdf
- Papyrus Prevention of Young Suicide Papyrus UK Suicide Prevention | Prevention of Young Suicide
- Anna Freud supporting-young-children-and-families-through-bereavement
- Childhood Bereavement Network For bereaved children and families
- Samaritans Contact Us | Samaritans
- Blue Cross Pet Bereavement and Loss Blue Cross Pet Bereavement Support Service | Pet Loss

Glossary of commonly used terms

Ambiguous loss – Loss without closure; a lack of clarity or facts

Anticipatory grief – Grief that occurs before an expected death, characterised by symptoms of sadness, frustration, guilt, and anger

Attachment – A feeling of love and need for another person, e.g. a parent and child

Bereaved parenting – Relinquishing the parental role with the dead child whilst continuing to functionally parent surviving children

Bereavement – A period of intense grief or mourning following the death of a loved one

Continuing bonds – Maintaining a relationship with a loved one after they have died; the retention of an emotional connection through grief related behaviours

Death ambivalence – Experiencing conflicting thoughts about death and dying, for example simultaneously feeling devastation and liberation after death occurs.

End of life care – The support and care provided to people who are terminally ill or have life-limiting conditions and are in the very final stages of life

Expected death – Knowing death will eventually occur, usually due to a medical diagnosis of an incurable disease

Grief – The intense sorrow felt by the death of a loved one

Grief response – The reaction to the death of a loved one characterised by a series of emotions and behaviours

Life-limiting Illness – An illness that is unlikely to be cured and will cause death at some point in the future

Palliative care – Care provided to terminally ill patients and their families with the intention of improving the quality of life, not extending it

Spousal Loss – The death of a husband, wife, or civil partner

Surrogate caregivers – Non-medical carers, usually friends and family, who contribute to providing end-of-life care for loved ones.

Terminal illness – A progressive disease that cannot be cured and death as a consequence of that disease is a certain expectation

Unexpected death – Death of a previously healthy person, an event not anticipated as a result of ill health

Unresolved grief – Grief that has not been addressed, manifesting in prolonged symptoms that interfere with the normal day-to-day functioning of the individual. Also known as complicated grief.