



For young people

# When someone special dies



A leaflet prepared with the help of young people who have been bereaved

## When someone special has died...

This leaflet has been given to you because someone important in your life has died.

Right at the moment, there's probably a lot for you to take in.

The information in this leaflet is designed to help you understand how you might be feeling, and to help you take care of yourself while you're finding your way through.

Try to remember that you're not alone - family and friends are there to support you and you can always make contact with other bereaved young people via websites and support groups.

*"Grief affects us all in different ways"*



The quotes used in this leaflet are from a 15 year old girl called Charlie whose little brother, Lewie, died. They reflect her thoughts and feelings on that day, and afterwards.

## Keeping yourself well

Grief can be exhausting, so try to look after yourself - eat well, sleep when you can and try to get a little exercise every day, even if its just a walk around the block.



## Joining an online forum

Finding out how other young people felt when they were bereaved, and sharing your experiences, can help you to feel less alone. There are details

of websites on the back of this leaflet which include forums especially for young people.

*"Sometimes all I need is a hug, but other times just to be left alone"*

Take each day a step at a time, do what feels right for you, and don't be afraid to ask for help when you need it.

## What helps?

As we're all different, what helps one person may not help another. But here are some things that bereaved young people have told us helped them:

*"I find myself not saying things to my family because it might make them sad"*

### Talking

Try talking with friends or family about how you are feeling. You could each share your memories of the person who has died; maybe even laugh and cry together. It's ok to show others how you're feeling. If you would rather talk to someone who is not so close, you might like to try talking to a counsellor, or calling a helpline.

### Reading

There are lots of books available that offer guidance and support to grieving young people - there is a booklist on our website at [www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)

When we receive sad and shocking news, it can be hard to take in. You may feel any or all of the following, or you may initially feel nothing at all:



However you feel, the important thing to remember is that you may experience loads of new emotions. This is a natural part of grief.

Understanding why this person has died can help you to accept the reality of the situation. If you have any unanswered questions - ask someone - a family member, or a police family liaison officer may be able to answer your questions.

## Going back to school or college



You may find going back to school quite a hard thing to do: part of you may just want to get back to your usual routine of daily life and seeing friends while part of you might just want to hide away.

You might find it helpful to think about how you would like to manage going back - would you like your teacher to tell the class before you return? Maybe you'd prefer to tell the class yourself, or to speak to people individually?

Maybe you wish that you didn't have to tell anyone at all, but if others don't know what you have to manage, they won't have the chance to offer you their care and support.

At first, you might be able to go back on a part time basis to give you a chance to settle in. Ask your class teacher or head of year what options are available to you.



## Funeral

The thought of going to the funeral might feel a bit overwhelming, especially if you haven't been to one before.

It might help to talk to friends and relatives about what happens at a funeral so that you feel more prepared. Remember, whether you go or not is your choice.

If you would like to, you might be able to put a letter, a picture, or something else special to you in the coffin before the funeral - whatever feels right for you.

The funeral can be helpful in giving you a chance to say goodbye to the person who has died.

## Changes

For many of us, change can be a worry. It might help to sit down with

your parent, carer or someone else you trust and make a list of what things will change now, and what things will stay the same. This can help you to feel more secure at a time when life can seem unpredictable.



## Organisations that may help

### **Child Bereavement UK**

Tel: 01494 568900

Web: [www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)

The charity offers a range of information sheets written specifically for young people. Please do contact us if you would like to find out more, or if you have any questions. Our website has a forum where young people can tell us about their thoughts and experiences to help us help other young people.

### **RD4U**

Tel: 0808 808 1677

Web: [www.rd4u.org.uk](http://www.rd4u.org.uk)

This is the children and young people's branch of Cruse Bereavement Care. The website contains helpful information for bereaved young people aged 12 - 18 years, a forum for sharing feelings and links to other organisations.

### **Winston's Wish**

Tel: 0845 203 0405

Web: [www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)

This charity, with branches in Cheltenham and Chichester, offers a national Family Line for anyone who is caring for a bereaved child, or when someone in the family has a life limiting illness. They also produce a range of supportive literature for children, their parents or carers, and a child-friendly website.

### **Youth Access**

Tel: 0208 772 9900

Web: [www.youthaccess.org.uk](http://www.youthaccess.org.uk)

Youth Access is the national membership organisation for young people's information, advice, counselling and support services. It is designed to help young people, carers, and professionals locate a service in their local area. These specialist agencies work with young people and offer a range of support services under one roof. Services are free and confidential and most offer a variety of ways to get in touch.



This leaflet has been produced with support from the Department of Health