

# LIVING WITH BEREAVEMENT



**WINSTON'S  
WISH *ww***

Giving hope to grieving children

# WE HELP CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE FIND THEIR FEET AFTER THEIR WORLDS ARE TURNED UPSIDE DOWN BY GRIEF.

Experiencing the death of someone, particularly someone close, can be one of the most traumatic experiences a child or young person can face. How a child grieves is vital to their immediate and long-term future, and that is where we can help.

Through direct bereavement support, training and resources we help children and young people to understand their feelings, find healthy ways to cope and move forward with hope for the future. We also support and equip the adults around grieving young people with the tools they need to have hopeful and practical conversations about bereavement.

## **Grief is natural and necessary**

Sadness, anger, guilt, and confusion are all very natural feelings for children and young people experiencing bereavement, and a necessary part of coming to terms with what's happened. Recognising that this is normal is very important – not just for children and young people, but for anyone close to them.

We can't make these feelings go away, but we can encourage children and young people to express them and find healthy ways to live with them, however painful or difficult they are.

*"I think that I would be a completely different person if it hadn't happened. And the person I am now does a lot of things that I'm not necessarily a fan of, that I think are definitely to do with his death and how it happened."*

Maya

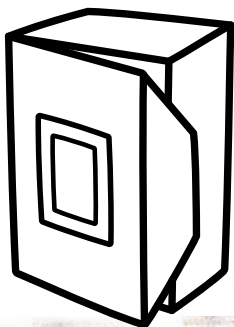
*"When I found out my dad had died, I was on an aeroplane. My first reaction to hearing the words 'dad is dead' was to have a panic attack. It felt like the walls of the plane were closing in on me and I was in complete shock. As I was taken off the plane, I remember screaming, I was shouting, "Why has this happened to me?"."*

Angharad

## The fear of forgetting

The greatest worry for many children and young people is that they will forget the person who has died. At Winston's Wish, we understand the importance of memories. Some memories are painful, but some of comforting – and they are all important. We have developed a number of ways for children and young people to hold onto these memories.

Creative ideas such as memory jars and memory boxes can help children and young people to treasure all kinds of things that remind them of the person who has died.



## Grief affects whole families

We understand the impact of death on the whole family. A parent who is struggling desperately to cope with their own grief may not know how best to support those in their care. Children and young people can often keep their feelings bottled-up because they don't want to upset other members of the family.

We encourage families to share their thoughts and feelings with each other, even if it's difficult.

*"When I was eleven, my mum passed away following a three year battle with cancer. Part of my support was a memory box, which has become very important to me, which helps me feel closer to my mum when I'm feeling down and acts as a source of comfort."*

Archie

# WITH THE RIGHT SUPPORT, BEREAVED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE CAN LEAD FULL AND FLOURISHING LIVES.

If children and young people are able to express their thoughts and feelings and are encouraged to talk about the person who has died, they can go on and achieve all things in life they want to.

## **What happens when bereaved children and young people can't express their feelings?**

If children or young people shut out grief and lock their thoughts and emotions away, they may become withdrawn, insecure and develop low self-esteem. This can affect their relationships, their school/uni work and their happiness. If they aren't encouraged to express their grief, they may never learn how to live with it.

After his dad died, Ben wasn't given the chance to express his feelings or make sense of his death. The lack of support and understanding Ben was shown contributed to his eventual exclusion from school.

*"This all started when our dad died. I was 10 years old. It was the middle of the night, he was gone in the ambulance when I woke up, I never saw him again or went to the funeral. I was just left to get on with it, no one asked me what I felt like or how life changed after dad died."*

Ben, 16



# MILLIE: STORY OF SUPPORT

On the 4th of January 2023 I lost my older sister, Martine. She passed away in an RTA, which was extremely unexpected. The pain and loss I felt that day was something I had never imagined I'd be feeling at 17. What made the loss of my sister more tragic was that she had a 4 year old son. My nephew looked up to and adored his mummy, so in a way I'm grieving for my nephew as well because he is too young to understand why he can't see his mummy again.

A few days after my sister passed, our family liaison officer suggested making a memory box. Martine loved everything about the moon and stars and the memory box I chose was a starry night

sky that was designed by Winston's Wish. This led me to research the charity and potentially get some support. I received 6 weeks of support, and it was one of the best decisions I've made. Being able to talk without judgement about my grief, as well as deeper issues and thoughts regarding what happened, almost allowed me to breathe again.

During my support it was suggested that I could become a Youth Ambassador for Winston's Wish. I accepted the offer with the aim to use my experience to give hope and reassurance to other young people who had experienced sibling loss or lost someone in a similar way.



# LISTENING AND SUPPORTING

Our Freephone National Helpline, ASK Email service and Live Chat, provides support, information, and guidance to anyone concerned about a child or young person who has been bereaved. We also talk to families and professionals when a family member is seriously ill and may die, helping them to support children and young people through the experience.

*"We just want to call to say thank you for supporting us over the phone. The advice was really helpful for me and my family. My sister died last week and although this was very difficult, we also spent a very special couple of weeks together with the ideas that Winston's Wish gave us. I would happily recommend Winston's Wish to anyone who is going through a bereavement of their own."* David

## Talking, sharing and remembering

We offer a range of proven ways to bereaved children and young people to cope with death. We encourage children, young people, and their families to share their feelings with each other and help them to make sense of their grief.

(2nd) It's important to use the right tools when supporting bereaved children and young people in their grief. At Winston's Wish, we provide many relevant resources and publications, to equip you and give you the confidence needed to help those who are grieving. We also offer a programme of specialist support to children and young people bereaved through murder and manslaughter, suicide, or in the military.

# WE ARE HERE TO HELP...

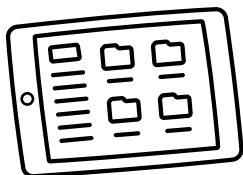
## FREEPHONE NATIONAL HELPLINE

Young people, parents and professionals can call our National Helpline for free on **08088 020 021** for on-going support and advice, Monday – Friday



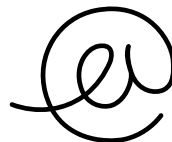
## ONLINE AND LIVE CHAT

For parents and professionals, visit **winstonswish.org**  
For young people, visit **talkgrief.org**



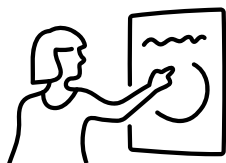
## EMAIL SUPPORT

Anyone requiring support and advice can email **ask@winstonswish.org**



## TRAINING

Professionals can access our training to give them the tools needed to support bereaved children and young people. Visit **winstonswish.org/training**



## PUBLICATIONS & RESOURCES

We have a range of publications and resources aimed at helping bereaved children and young people come to terms. Visit **shop.winstonswish.org**



This booklet is for parents, carers and professionals who are caring for, or are working with, bereaved children and young people. It aims to help you to understand a child's grief and ways in which you can support them.

# WE CANNOT SUPPORT BEREAVED CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE, AND THEIR FAMILIES WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT.

## BY PHONE:

To make a donation by phone using your card please call our fundraising team on **01242 515 157**.

## ONLINE:

To make a donation online please visit **[winstonswish.org/donate-online/](https://winstonswish.org/donate-online/)**

