



Giving hope to grieving children

The impact of grief on children and young people



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WHAT GRIEF CAN LOOK LIKE

AGE DEVELOPMENT & UNDERSTANDING

WAYS TO SUPPORT

HOW WINSTON'S WISH CAN SUPPORT YOU

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Why is self care important?

It is important to look after yourself when supporting a grieving child...

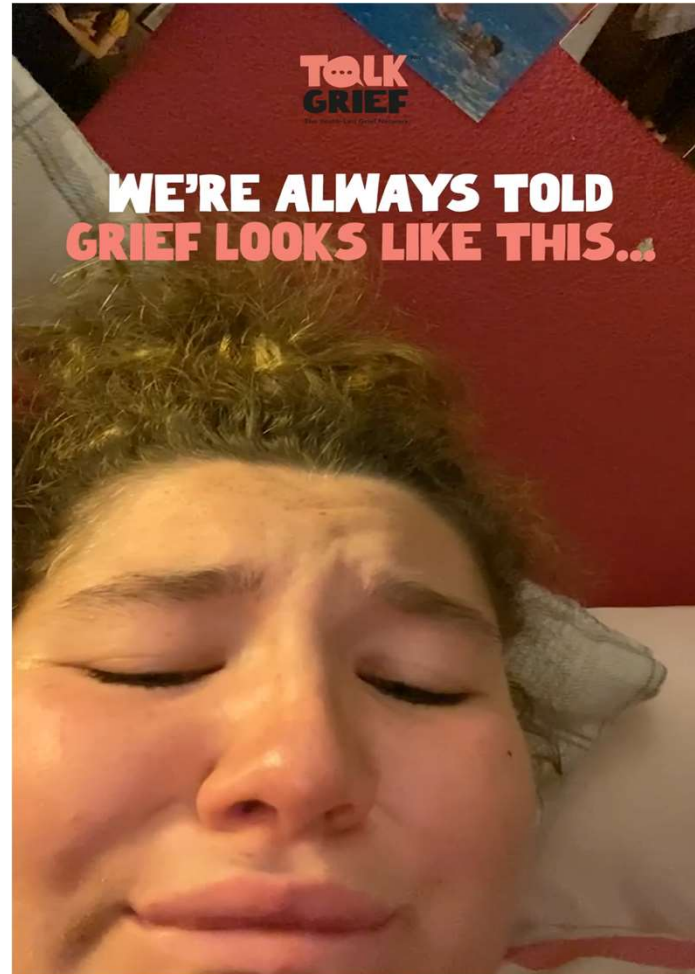
Bereavement is an emotive subject. Our responses are unique to our lives and experience & so are our ways of coping



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What does grief look like?



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All children are affected by a death...



...regardless of their age or ability

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Impact of Bereavement

Anxiety

Vivid memories

Sleep difficulties

**Sadness and
longing**

**Anger and acting
out behaviour**

**Guilt, self-reproach
and shame**

School problems

**Physical
complaints**

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Dyregrov 2008



How a child is impacted by a death

Cause - expected, sudden, accident, suicide, homicide

Their relationship to the person who has died – close, difficult, limited contact

Timing - what else is happening for this child and others within the family, others' emotional health

Family set-up – relationship within the family and how do they respond to grief as a family

Community – culture, support, rituals

The child - developmental stage, resilience

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The death of a sibling

Loss of
childhood

Regret

Disenfranchised
grief

Shock

Confusion

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Ages and Stages

Children grieve in different ways according to their stage of development in terms of:

what they understand

how they feel

how they behave



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Ages/stages of grief

0 – 4 years

- Don't understand concept of death
- Take explanations literally
- Feelings may be acted out in behaviour and play
- May ask questions over and over again

5 – 8 years

- Begin to understand death is forever
- Curious and confused
- 'Magical' thinking – may think they have caused the death
- Have strong feelings but may lack vocabulary to express them

9 – 12 years

- Understand the finality of death
- Curious about physical aspects of death
- Feel 'different' to peers
- Have vocabulary to express feelings but may need help to do so

13 – 18 years

- Have an adult understanding of death
- Dependence vs. independence
- Importance of peer group and 'fitting in'
- May get involved in risk-taking behaviours

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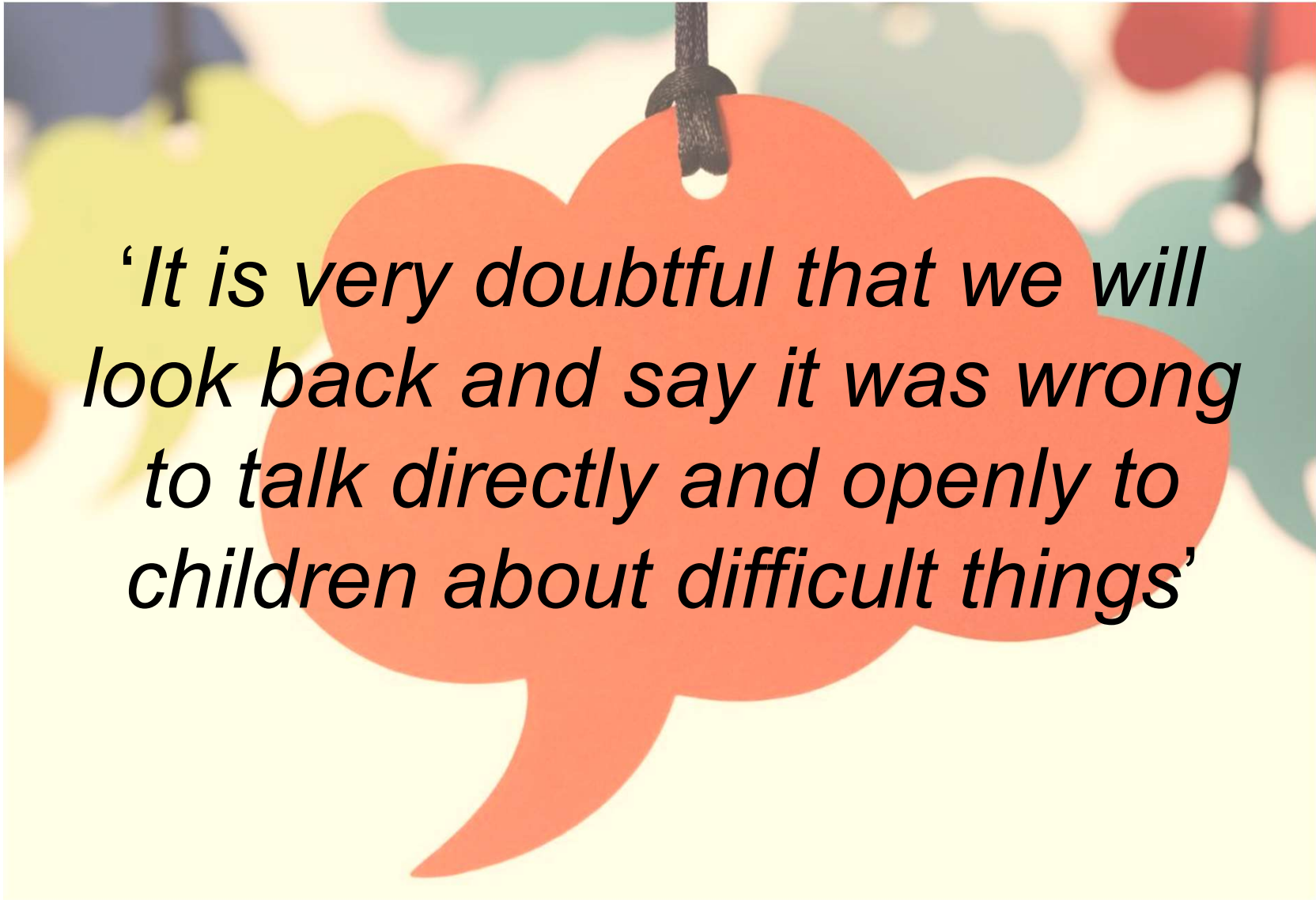


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NIWteSHY0Go>

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Confidence to say something



‘It is very doubtful that we will look back and say it was wrong to talk directly and openly to children about difficult things’

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Dyregrov, A. (2008) *Grief in Children: A Handbook for Adults*, 2nd ed.



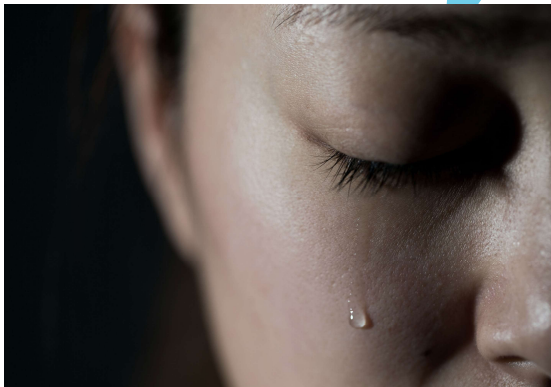
Starting the Conversation

I can see that you have been a bit upset today, I'm wondering if that's because you're missing mum?



It's okay to talk about your brother, and if you get upset that's OK too.

I'm always here for you, anytime you want to talk



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Questions & answers

It's my fault that he died isn't it?

Lots of people feel guilty when someone dies, it's totally normal to feel that way, But it was nothing you did or didn't do; nothing you said or thought, or didn't say, or didn't think, made this happen. It is no-ones fault, definitely not yours.

Why didn't someone else die instead?

I know it seems so unfair when you loved her so much but sadly her body stopped working. Nobody else could take her place. I know you wished she hadn't died.

Questions & answers

What will happen to me if dad dies too?

It is really very unlikely that your dad will die whilst you still need him, but if he was to die then....(realistic explanation)

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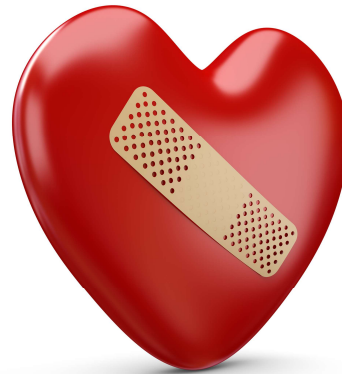
What Bereaved Children Need

Age appropriate information

Answering questions honestly in simple language

Reassurance they are not to blame nor need to take on extra responsibilities

However they feel is OK



Support with overwhelming feelings



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Worden 1996



What Bereaved Children Need



**To be listened
to in their own
space and time**

**Opportunities to
recall memories**

**Involvement
and
inclusion in
important
discussions**

**To keep
routine and
regular
activities**

**Honest role
modelling from
supporting
adults**

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Worden 1996



Puddle jumping

Grieving



Alarm - wake up remember
mum's in hospital

Memory triggered - walking to
school and seeing other mums

Tutorial lesson - letter for
"parents"

Get home - house feels empty

Getting on with life



Get dressed, remember PE kit,
hurried breakfast

Break - talking about who
fancies who

Science test - oh no!
Get to friend's house - try out
new video game

To face or avoid grief all the time can lead to serious mental health consequences.

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Strobe & Schut (Death Studies, 1999)



Growing around grief



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Continuing Bonds



Bereaved remain psychologically and emotionally connected to the deceased

Connection develops and changes over time

Relationships continue

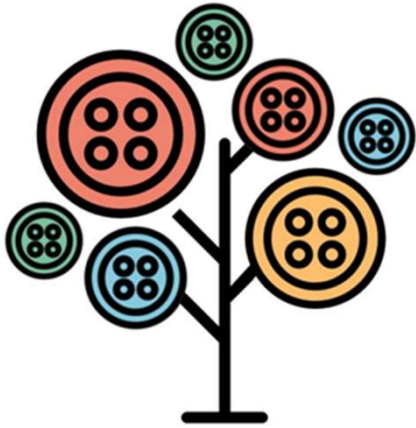
These 'connections' provide solace, comfort, support and ease the transition from the past to the future

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Klass, Silverman & Nickman 1996



Memory capture activities



Button tree



Bracelet



Memory box



Memory jar

'It's not remembering mum that hurts, it's forgetting that makes me feel like I'm letting her down'

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Narrative grief: the importance of meaning

The Story



Making Sense



Processing



Ability to make sense of loss = Lower incidence of complicated grief

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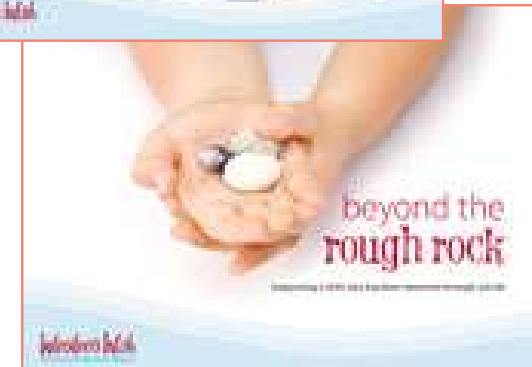
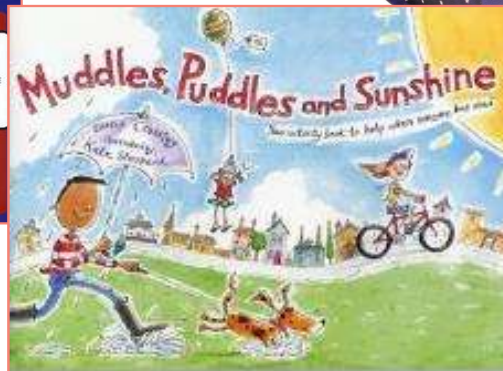
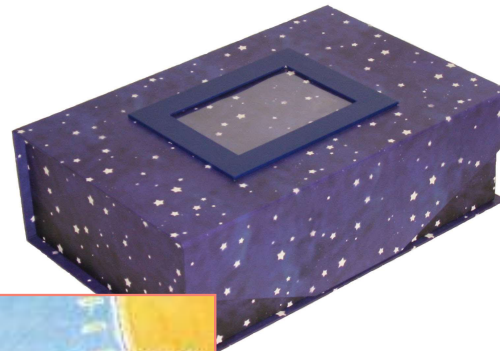
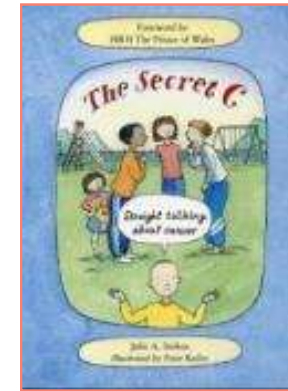
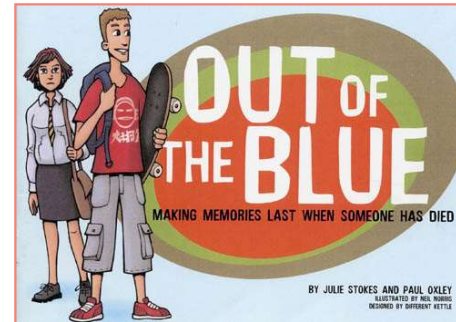
HOW WINSTON'S WISH CAN SUPPORT YOU

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Publications and Resources

Over 30 years we have developed a range of books, memory boxes and other practical support materials including PSHE resources and translated materials



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Talk Grief

TALK GRIEF™

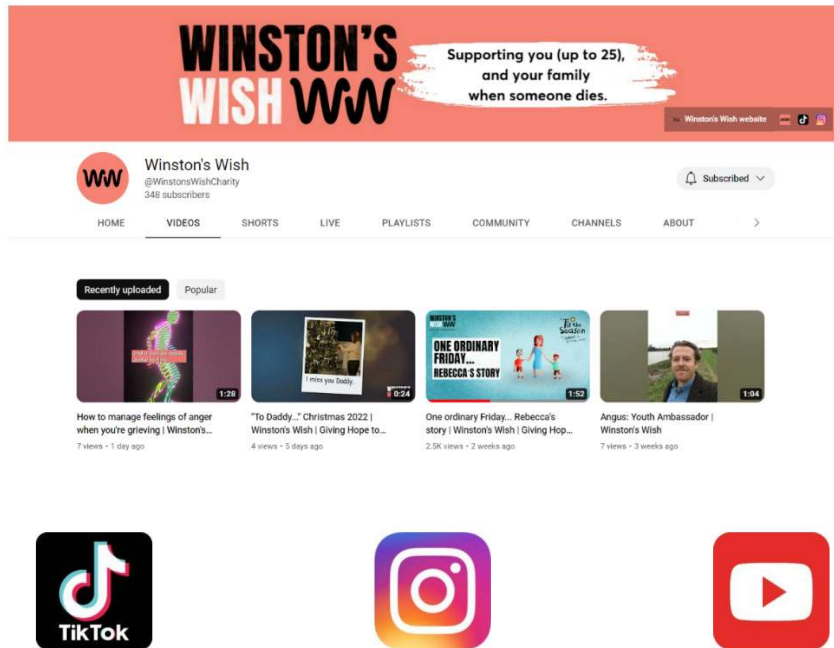


<https://www.talkgrief.org/>

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Social media



https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U72Z_DyP-lc

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How can we support you?

National Freephone Helpline - 08088 020 021

8.00am – 8.00pm Monday to Friday

Young people, parents, carers and professionals

Ask Email Service - <https://www.winstonswish.org/supporting-you/ask-a-question/>

Live Chat - <https://www.winstonswish.org/online-chat/>

Website – <https://www.winstonswish.org/>

Talk Grief - <https://www.talkgrief.org/>

Resources for Schools

<https://www.winstonswish.org/supporting-you/support-for-schools/>

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Self-care

It is important to look after yourself
when supporting a
grieving child...



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Thanks for your time
We would love to know what you think 😊



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