

# LIVING WITH BEREAVEMENT



**WINSTON'S  
WISH** **ww**

Giving hope to grieving children

# WE HELP CHILDREN LIVE AFTER SOMEONE CLOSE TO THEM DIES

The death of a parent or sibling is the most devastating loss a child will ever face. How a child grieves is vital to their immediate and long-term future, and that is where we can help.

Winston's Wish gives hope to grieving children and offers them, their families, and professionals, a wide range of practical support and guidance.

## **Grief is natural and necessary**

Sadness, anger, guilt and confusion are all very natural feelings for a child 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 the child, but for anyone close to them.

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

*"It has completely changed my life. I was so shocked, and so angry. I was shaking. I didn't know how to react. Now I miss him so much."*

Katie

*"At the beginning we couldn't see how to get through. Now we know we can – we laugh, we cry, we find ways to live and remember."*

Darryl\*

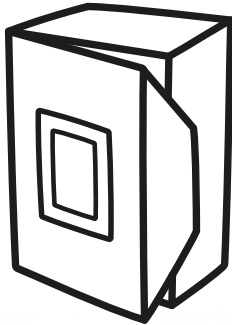
\*Messages left by young people on the Winston's Wish website. Names may have been changed.

Helpline: **08088 020 021**

## The fear of forgetting

The greatest worry for many children is that they will forget the person who has died. At Winston's Wish, we understand the importance of memories. Some are painful, some are comforting – and they are all important. So we have developed a number of ways for children to keep their memories safe.

Creative ideas such as memory jars and memory boxes help children to treasure all kinds of things that remind them of their relationship with 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 loss may not know how best to support their children. Children 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 my mum died I was only eight years old. Now, nearly finishing secondary school, I can't really remember things about her as clearly as I could then. Looking through my memory box helps me to remember things I love about her."*

Nia



**Giving hope to grieving children**

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

If children 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 can't express their feelings?**

If children 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 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



# LIVVIE'S STORY

After the death of her mum, Livvie and her dad were supported by Winston's Wish. Livvie received face-to-face support in individual and group settings, which helped her come to terms with the loss of her mum.

*"I remember my mum had a heart attack. In the morning, I came downstairs and my dad sat me down and he just said 'last night your mum died.' The first thing that went through my head was that everything was going to change.*

*Winston's Wish has completely changed the way I look at how my mum passed away. Instead of looking at it in a sad way, I can now look at it in a happy way, but still be quite upset that she's gone."*



# LISTENING AND SUPPORTING

Our Freephone National Helpline 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 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 help children and their families to cope with death. We encourage children and their families to share their feelings with each other and help them to make sense of their grief.

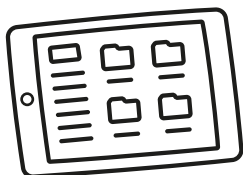
Winston's Wish offers face-to-face support in both individual and group circumstances, via a Freephone National Helpline, and online tools. We also offer a programme of specialist support to children and young people bereaved through murder and manslaughter, suicide or in the military.

Helpline: **08088 020 021**

# WE ARE HERE TO HELP...

## FREEPHONE NATIONAL HELPLINE

Parents and professionals can call our National Helpline for free on **08088 020 021** for on-going support and advice, Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm.



## ONLINE

For parents and professionals, visit **winstonswish.org**  
For young people, visit **help2makesense.org**

## TRAINING

Professionals can access our training to give them the tools needed to support bereaved children and families.

Visit **winstonswish.org/training**



## PUBLICATIONS & RESOURCES

We have a range of publications and resources aimed at helping bereaved children come to terms with their grief.

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 AND THEIR FAMILIES WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT.

### TEXT DONATE NOW:

Text **WISH11£(amount)** to **70070**

### 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/)**

