

# TRAUMATIC BEREAVEMENT

## A guide for children and young people

This guide explains traumatic bereavement and might help if you are worried about yourself or someone else.

### What is traumatic bereavement?

It is really hard when someone important in your life dies – you might get filled up with lots of different feelings. Even though you may be really sad, you might sometimes be able to have some fun and enjoy things.

Grief is the word that explains all the feelings of missing the person who died. It can be helpful to think about grieving as like stepping in and out of puddles. When someone steps into their puddle of grief, they remember all the sadness of the death of the important person. When they step out of the puddle, they find they can still have some fun. The sadness hasn't gone, it is just that they are not in the grieving puddle all the time.

When you have a traumatic bereavement, it is extra hard, and your feelings might fill you up so much that they keep overflowing. As well as feeling very sad, you might feel unsafe, angry, worried or frightened.

What happened might be so hard to think about that you spend a lot of time and energy trying not to think or talk about it. This can get in the way of having fun and doing the things you used to enjoy.



With traumatic bereavement it can feel as though the puddle is so deep it is more like a well and they are stuck in a deep place with lots of difficult thoughts and feelings. This makes it really hard to cope.

## What makes a bereavement traumatic?

What makes a bereavement traumatic is different for everyone. It is not because the person died in a particular way or at a particular time. It is what the death means for the person who is grieving and how this affects the way they see things. This can have a significant impact on their life. Although everyone in a family might be grieving for the same person, each person's grief may be very different. Someone in the family might need extra support, others might not. It is not your fault if you are struggling and you need extra help.

## Where can I get help?

If you feel that bereavement is extra hard for you or someone you know and you or they are finding it difficult to manage most of the time, you should talk to an adult you trust. Ask the adult to help you find out where you can get support.

These are some suggestions:

- **Child Bereavement UK**
- **Winston's Wish**
- **Childhood Bereavement Network map of local services**
- **NHS mental health services**
- **Your GP**





**UK TRAUMA  
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