Guidance for meeting emotional needs and promoting recovery following a sad or traumatic event

Suggested reading and resources

Reference books

Abrams, R. (2012) *When Parents Die: Learning to Live with the Loss of a Parent.* London: Routledge

Rebecca Abrams draws on her personal and professional understandings of parental loss, as well as the experiences of many other adults, teenagers and children, to provide an honest, compassionate and insightful exploration of the experience of losing a parent. The book covers the entire course of grieving, from the immediate aftermath of a parent's death through to the point of recovery, paying particular attention to the many circumstances that can prolong and complicate mourning, including sudden death.

Barnard P., Morland, I., & Nagy. J. (1999) *Children Bereavement and Trauma: Nurturing Resilience.* London: Jessica Kingsley

This book is written based on the authors' experience of working with bereaved children after the Hillsborough disaster. The book promotes the idea of healthy coping and explores ways in which children and their families can be enabled to do this.

Hindmarch, C. (2009) *On the Death of a Child 3rd Edition.* London: Routledge

This book provides practical advice, resources for further support and reading, and reassurance that professionals can make a difference. From theory and narrative come practical ideas on what to say, what to do, how to behave, how to stay humble and how professionals can look after themselves in what can be particularly traumatic and upsetting circumstances.

Holland, J., Dance, R., Macmanus, N & Stitt, C. (2005) *Lost for Words: Loss and Bereavement and Awareness Training.* London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley

Lost for Words is a training package designed for teachers and carers supporting children who are experiencing bereavement, be it through death or any other kind of loss. This package is designed for use by trainers over the course of a day, or over several days. It offers crucial guidance, soundly underpinned by research carried out with bereaved children and their parents, in schools, and by the "Iceberg" project at the University of York.

Krementz J (1988) *How it Feels When a Parent Dies.* New York: Knopf

This book is a collection of short essays by children who have lost a parent offering insights into their emotions, coping mechanisms, and how their lives have changed. The children talk not only about what they felt about the death when it occurred, but how they feel now, how they are doing now, and how their life and their families lives have changed.

Job, N. & Francis, G. (2004) *Childhood Bereavement: Developing the Curriculum and Pastoral Support.* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

This resource aims to help teachers and those working in schools to address death, dying and bereavement. It provides practical ideas for how to achieve this through the curriculum, as well as through pastoral care.

Picture books for children about loss



Burningham, J. (1984) *Grandpa.* UK: Random House

Grandpa is a picture book about the bond between a young girl, Emily, and her grandfather. Through shared adventures and imagination, they grow close, but the story subtly addresses aging and loss. The book gently explores themes of love, memory, and the lasting connection between grandparents and grandchildren.

Gleitzman, M.(1989) *Two Weeks with the Queen*. London: Puffin Books

Two Weeks with the Queen is a moving story which addresses deeply serious issues about illness and loss with bright moments of humour. It is about a young boy on a quest to find the best the doctor in the world to cure his brother of cancer. Suitable for 10-year olds and over.

Jones, J. (1988) *Dadi Maa Dies*. UK: Blackie Children's Books

Dadi Maa Dies is a Hindu story about a grandmother's profound impact on her family. The story highlights the love, wisdom, and traditions she passes down, and how her death affects her grandchildren and their memories of her.

Karst, P. (Author) & Lew-Vriethoff (illustrator) (2018) *The Invisible String.* US: Little Brown Young Readers

The Invisible String has been acknowledged as a story to help children understand and cope with all kinds of separation anxiety, loss, and grief. In this relatable and reassuring contemporary classic, a mother tells her two children that they're all connected by an invisible string made of love. Even though you can't see it with your eyes, you can feel it deep in your heart, and know that you are always connected to the ones you love.

LeBlanc, S. (1999) *A Dragon in Your Heart.* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

A Dragon in Your Heart is a short book about the author's personal experience with breast cancer and wanting to find a way to explain her situation to her young daughter. This book comprised of a few sentences and drawings became a cherished item for the daughter who carried with her for weeks.

Sticky, D. (2008) *Water Bugs and Dragonflies: Explaining Death to Children. Revised Ed.* London & New York: Continuum Publishing Corporation

Water Bugs and Dragonflies uses the metaphor of water bugs turning into dragonflies to gently explain death to young children. The book helps kids understand and cope with the concept of death by showing how life changes and continues in different forms.

Varley, S. (1987) *Badger's Parting Gifts.* London: Anderson Press

Badger's Parting Gifts is a story about Badger, who is nearing the end of his life. As he prepares to say goodbye, he gives thoughtful, parting gifts to his friends, helping them remember him fondly. The story gently addresses themes of loss and remembrance, emphasizing the lasting impact of love and the comfort of cherished memories.

Wilhelm, J. H. (1988) *I'll Always Love You.* USA: Dragonfly Books

I'll Always Love You by Hans Wilhelm is a children's book about the enduring bond between a young boy and his beloved dog. When the dog becomes old and ill, the book gently addresses the theme of loss, emphasizing the deep love and cherished memories that remain even after the pet has passed away.

Wilson, S. (2000) *The Grandad Tree.* Walker Books Ltd

The *Grandad Tree* is a story that features children from a multi-cultural background and how they remember how they used to play with their grandad. It emphasises that nature and the seasons change just in the way that people grow old.

Picture books for children who have witnessed violence or trauma.

Holmes, M. M. (2000) *A Terrible Thing Happened: A Story for Children who have Witnessed Violence or Trauma.* Magination Press

A Terrible Thing Happened is a story about Sherman the raccoon who saw the most terrible thing happen. At first he tried to forget about it, but soon something inside him started to bother him. He felt nervous for no reason. Sometimes his stomach hurt. He had bad dreams. And he started to feel angry and do mean things, which got him in trouble. Then he met Ms. Maple, who helped him talk about the terrible thing that he had tried to forget. Now Sherman is feeling much better. This story is for children who have witnessed any kind of violent or traumatic episode, including physical abuse, school or gang violence, accidents, homicide, suicide, and natural disasters such as floods or fire.

Kraulis, J. (2013) *Whimsy's Heavy Things.* Canada: Tundra Books

Whimsy's Heavy Things is a metaphorical story about how it feels to carry around the feelings we have after something traumatic or sad happens. In this story, Whimsy is trying to find a way to deal with very heavy stones. After trying things like hiding them under a rock and sailing them out to sea, she learns they are much more manageable one at a time and with help.

Sheppard, C. H. (1998) *Brave Bart: A Story for Traumatized and Grieving Children.* USA: Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children

Brave Bart is a matter-of-fact story about what happens to Bart the cat after the "bad, sad and scary thing" happens. He is teased by friends for his reaction of fear and for choosing to seclude himself. He has the support of Helping Hannah, who leads him to see himself as a survivor rather than a victim, while validating his feelings.

Information for young people

Dougy Center for Grieving Children (2002) *After a Murder: A Workbook for Grieving Kids.* USA: Dougy Centre

The workbook includes drawing activities, puzzles and word games to help explain confusing elements specific to a murder, such as the police and the media.

Resources

Child bereavement UK – Books and resources page

The Child Bereavement UK Books and Resources page offers a curated selection of books and materials to help children, young people, and families understand and cope with grief. It includes age-appropriate titles for different developmental stages, guidance for parents and professionals, and resources for schools to support bereaved pupils. These tools aim to make conversations about death and loss easier and provide comfort during difficult times.

https://www.childbereavementuk.org/pages/category/books-resources

Child Bereavement UK – social stories to help with grief

Child Bereavement UK social stories page provides free downloadable stories designed to help children with autism or SEND understand and cope with death, grief, and bereavement. These simple, structured narratives explain difficult concepts in a clear, accessible way, supporting conversations about loss in a sensitive manner

Social stories about bereavement | Child Bereavement UK

***Memory Garden: Bereavement Healing Card Game.* USA: Bright Spots**

Therapeutic cards to help children experiencing a loss to identify, process, and work through a variety of bereavement issues, including changes within the family, trauma, grief, sorrow, anger, depression, anxiety and fears. Helps children to identify their emotions and express their feelings by finishing incomplete sentences and making up stories.

Stubbs, D. & Gardner, K. (2008) *Hope Beyond the Headlines: Supporting a Child Bereaved Through Murder or Manslaughter.* UK: Winston's Wish

This book offers practical advice for families in the immediate days, weeks and months following a murder. It is written for both parents and professionals so that they can help children and young people in understanding and managing the particular difficulties and complexities that surround a death by murder or manslaughter.