

Winston's Wish
the charity for bereaved children



Registered Charity No. 1061359

www.winstonswish.org.uk

The Winston's Wish Helpline:
08452 03 04 05

(9am to 5pm Monday to Friday) Calls charged at local rate.

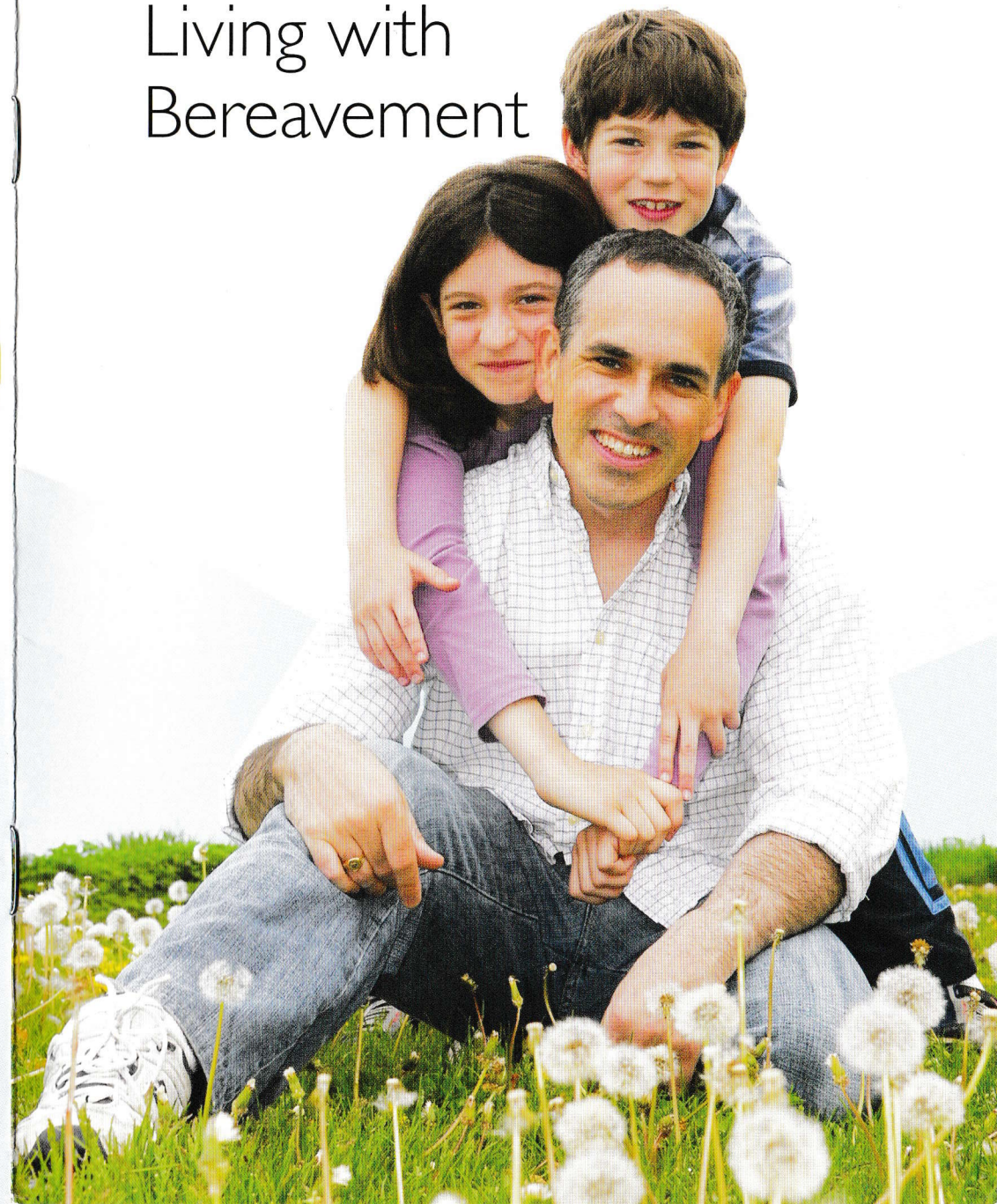


Quality & confidence for callers to helplines

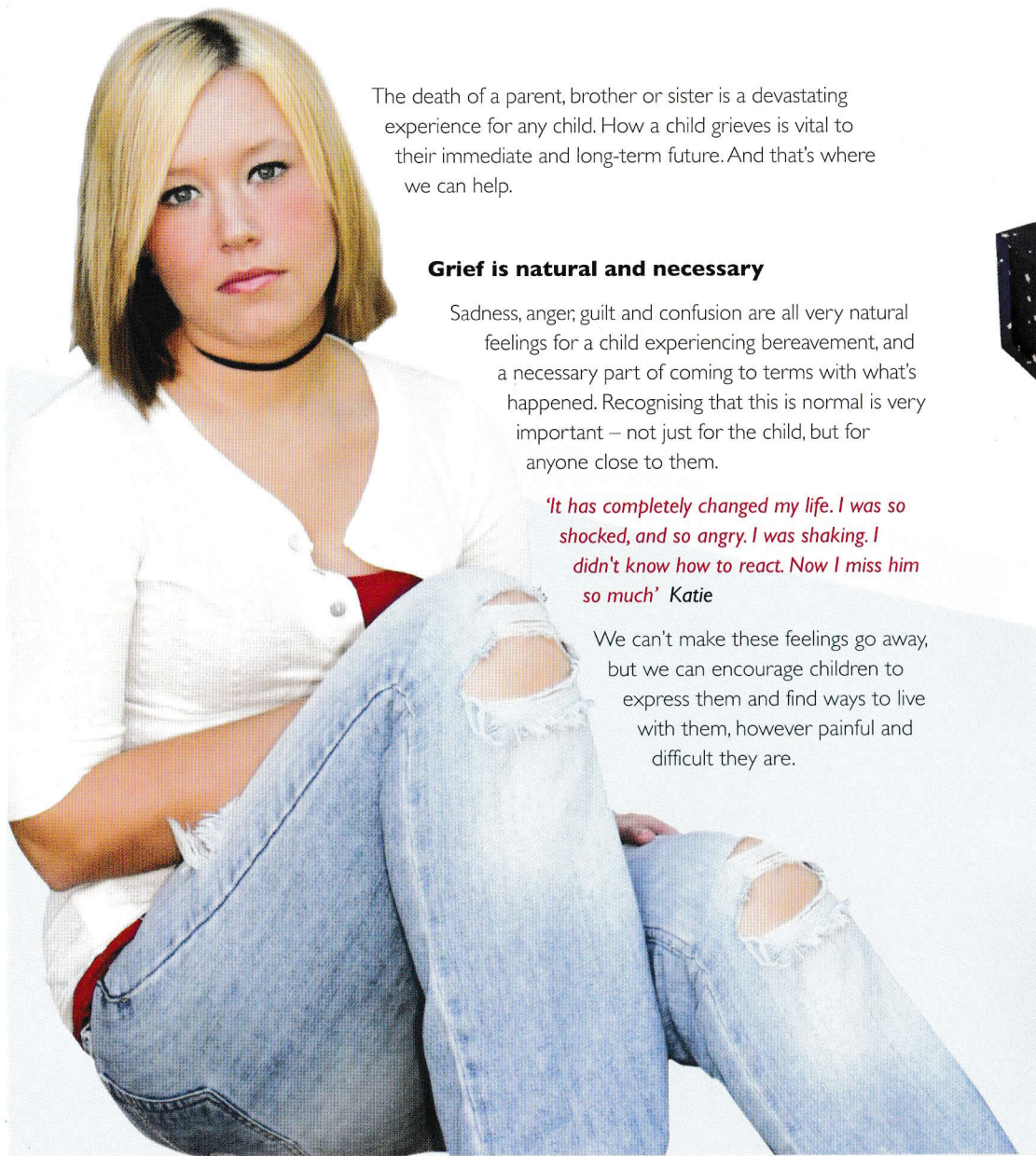
Winston's Wish publications are available on our website at: www.winstonswish.org.uk/shop

Winston's Wish
the charity for bereaved children

Living with
Bereavement



We help children live after someone close to them dies



The death of a parent, brother or sister is a devastating experience for any child. How a child grieves is vital to their immediate and long-term future. And that's where we can help.

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.

'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

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.

The fear of forgetting

Many children's greatest worry 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 good memories safe.

We have developed creative ideas such as memory jars and memory boxes, where children can keep and treasure all kinds of things that remind them of their relationship with the person who has died.



*"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."**

Grief affects whole families

We understand the impact of a 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 their family.

We encourage families to share their thoughts and feelings with each other, even if it's difficult. And we aim to help them regain strength and confidence – so that they can find a way forward and rebuild their lives together.

*"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."**



*Messages left by young people on the Winston's Wish website.

With the right support, bereaved children become resilient adults

If children are able to express their thoughts and feelings, if they are encouraged to talk about the person who died, if they are shown how to hold on to their memories, and if they learn to live with their loss – they can go on and achieve all the things in life they want to.



Natalie was able to share her feelings

After her Mum died, Natalie was given the chance to meet other young people who were also struggling to make sense of a parent's death. Sharing her feelings helped her to cope with her Mum's death and gave her the strength and confidence to follow her dream of going to college.



"Now I can share stories and memories of Mum without becoming very upset or angry. I now believe that life is for living. Mum would've wanted me to sort out the things I wanted to do, and now I am going to go for it." Natalie

What happens when bereaved children can't express their feelings?

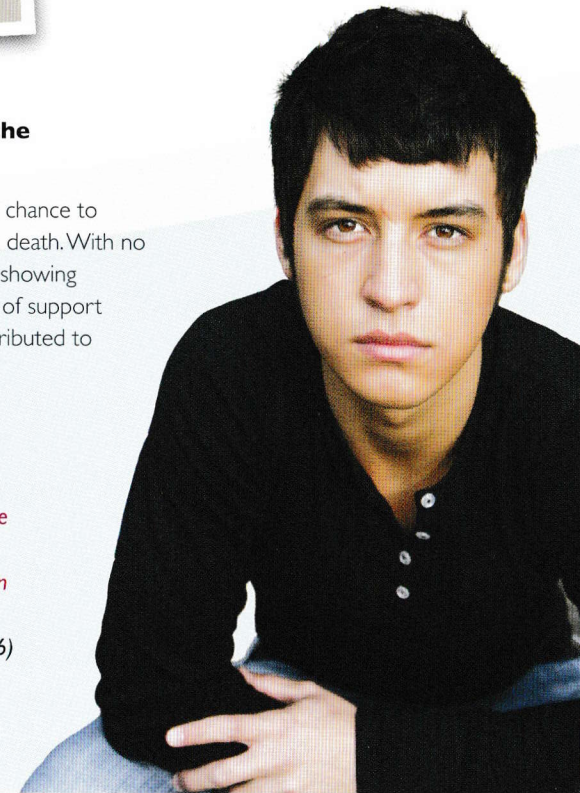


If children shut out grief and lock their thoughts and emotions away, they may become withdrawn, insecure and develop low self-esteem. This can affect their relationships, their school work and their happiness. If they aren't encouraged to express their grief, they may never learn how to live with it.

Ben wasn't able to talk about the death of his Dad

After his Dad died, Ben wasn't given the chance to express his feelings or make sense of his death. With no other outlet for his feelings, Ben started showing disruptive behaviour at school. 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)

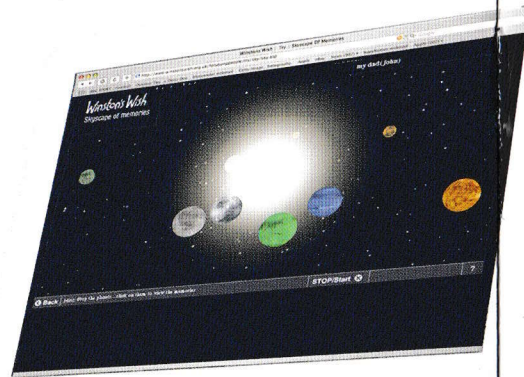
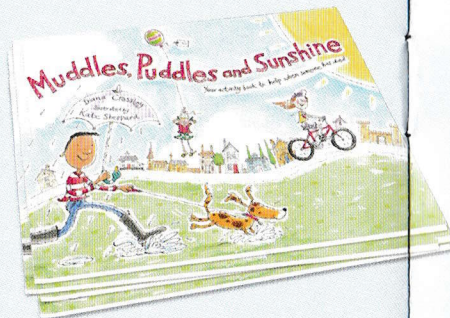
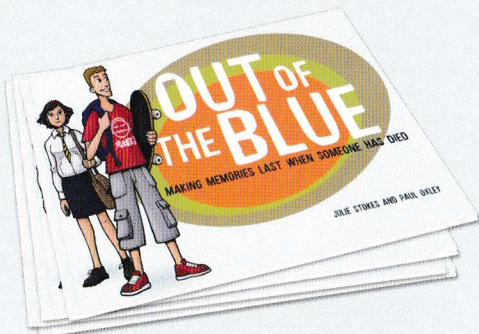


We are here to help...

Providing information and support

Our website is a valuable resource for people of all ages, and particularly for children and young people. Bereaved children can log on to our website and share thoughts and experiences with other young people who really do understand. They can also ask questions, scribble thoughts and feelings on our Graffiti Wall, and remember the person who died in our Skyscape of Memories.

For parents and carers, and for professionals, particularly teachers, our website provides information, advice and helpful downloads for supporting a bereaved child. Also available online is our shop which has a range of leaflets and books. For example, 'Out of the Blue' is great for teenagers while 'Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine' works well for a younger child.



Listening and supporting

Our 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. For many parents, just knowing that there is an organisation out there who understands what their family is going through can be very reassuring. Our professionally qualified advisers help to rebuild the confidence of parents – enabling them to better support their children. Our advisers also guide professionals such as teachers, social workers and palliative care nurses who work with grieving children.

“They are so supportive; they’re always on hand to give a different perspective, or to offer ideas to help overcome the latest stumbling block.” Rob

Talking, sharing and remembering

We encourage children and their families to share their feelings with each other. We can help children to make sense of their feelings and, with support, thousands of families have found a way through their grief.

Sharing stories and experiences can be very therapeutic for many of the children we help. We run residential weekends in Gloucestershire and West Sussex where children and young people come together.

We offer a range of proven ways to help children and their families cope with death. With support, a child who has been bereaved can grow up to become a resilient adult, leading a full and rewarding life.

“I can never thank Winston's Wish enough for their support which has helped my children and I adapt and move forward. Where else could we have gone to be understood, accepted and listened to and not pitied, ignored and judged?” Parents Evaluation 2007



www.winstonswish.org.uk

Helpline 08452 03 04 05