



Bereaved children

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Why I have chosen this topic

- ◇ This area comes across like a grey topic- it is not really spoken about
- ◇ I wanted to gain an understanding of the impacts
- ◇ How we can help



Statistics

- A parent of children under 18 dies every 22 minutes in the UK; around 23,600 a year. This equates to around 111 children being bereaved of a parent every day.
- 1 in 29 5-16 year olds has been bereaved of a parent or sibling - that's a child in every average class.
- (Child bereavement UK 2018)
- Estimated that there are around 26,000 school age children in Scotland who have been bereaved of a parent or a sibling at some point in their childhood (nhs, education for Scotland)



What is bereavement

- ◇ 'Bereavement is the experience of losing someone important to us' – (Mind,2021)
- ◇ Characterised by grief
- ◇ Experiencing- anger, guilt, loneliness and anxiety
- ◇ **“Bereavement is not only a very emotionally distressing experience but can also leave people feeling confused, afraid and dislocated from their sense of who they normally are and how they normally respond.”**



Loss of a parent

- ◆ It can be harder to grieve for a parent than anybody else.
- ◆ Parents are people we have known the longest- increase our chances of knowing them best
- ◆ loss of support and guidance- (healthline)
- ◆ Loss of an unconditional love
- ◆ May Live with regret- may regret the things you didn't do
- ◆ Changing identity- loss of connection in the past
- ◆ (cruse bereavement support)



Purpose of grief- Living with grief Tony Lake

The purpose of grief is to enable us to adapt to what has happened over a period of time and bring us back to life.

Grief renews all the purposes of our lives, grief allows us to feel and accept fear, anger and worry in new ways and allows us to experience greater joy and peace.

Grief for those we love is also an act of completion on their behalf. Through our grief for them, we dedicate a part of our life to completing their life-purposes



- ❖ Children feel the impact of bereavement in physical, emotional, social, cognitive and behavioural responses to bereavement (working with bereaved children and young people page 13, Brenda Mallon, Nadeau 1997)
- ❖ Gender influences the young person's response to death.
- ❖ Boys tend to think of death from a biological point of view as the end of life, whereas girls were interested in exploring the idea of an afterlife and metaphysical meanings in death (Tamn 1996)

Impact of bereavement on a child



- ◆ You could also suggest that girls may react worse to death than boys, this is because women have predetermined characteristics, such as being more caring, protective and loyal to men (biological explanation for gender different, Dec.2,2017)
- ◆ Impacts Education, youth crime, sleep, appetite, anxiety, depression and physical pain

Impact of bereavement



Youth crime and bereavement

- ◇ Bereavement in childhood has also shown a link to youth crime. CYJC has identified a higher prevalence of bereavement and loss among people who are in the justice system.
- ◇ Bereavements experienced by people in custody have been found to be involved in traumatic events such as murder or suicide
- ◇ Committing crimes to express their feelings- feel angry, lonely, neglected



Physical health and bereavement

- ❖ One effect of grief is a loss of appetite, this can turn into a major change in weight loss.
- ❖ A continuous loss of appetite can lead to eating disorders- struggling to cope and adapt to this life change- may lose appetite or find comfort within food.
- ❖ Eating disorders can cause a reduced heart rate, leading to a lack of oxygen going to the brain, creating individuals to become more physically and mentally ill.



Bereavement and education

Lower academic
attainment

Low aspirations
for continued
learning

Struggle with
concentrating

Feel excluded
from peers- not
going through the
same situation

Poor mental
health



Post traumatic stress disorder

Sudden death which occurs in traumatic circumstances affects the bereaved child extremely. Death because of murder, suicide and other hurtful circumstances may cause post traumatic stress disorder in children.

This can affect their daily lives- lack of positive emotions, outbursts, sleep problems, lack of positive emotions, fear, avoiding places or people and very sensitive



How we can help

- ◆ School councillors- make children more aware that they are available
- ◆ Encourage children to meet up with other bereaved children- enables them to understand that they are not alone
- ◆ Do not punish them for a change in their behaviour



Research method

- Focus groups

 - Help me provide qualitative data

 - Will help me understand individuals experiences

- Interviews

 - Talk to children who are going through bereavement/been through bereavement

 - Try and find a link between each individual



Why I think my research will help

- ◆ My research will help those who are going through bereavement, or know someone who is going through bereavement
- ◆ It will also help individuals who do not understand what bereavement is
- ◆ It will also help individuals who are completing certain careers, such as social workers or councillors understand how they are able to help a child who is going through bereavement



References

- ◇ [What is bereavement? | Mind, the mental health charity - help for mental health problems](#)
- ◇ [The Biological Explanation for Gender Differences – Owlcation](#)
- ◇ [Bereavement-and-EEI-1.pdf \(cycj.org.uk\)](#)
- ◇ [Impact of bereavement on children, their development and education - Blog - HSR Psychology - Clinical and educational psychology service for children and young people, based in Manchester.](#)
- ◇ [Post-traumatic Stress Disorder in Children | CDC](#)
- ◇ [Losing a Parent: 10 Tips for Handling the Grief \(healthline.com\)](#)
- ◇ [Losing a Parent | Coping after the Death of a Parent \(cruse.org.uk\)](#)
- ◇ [Bereavement | How counselling can help \(bacp.co.uk\)](#)
- ◇ [UK death & bereavement statistics | Child Bereavement UK](#)
- ◇ [Children who are Bereaved | Support Around Death \(scot.nhs.uk\)](#)
- ◇ Living with grief- Tony Lake
- ◇ Working with bereaved children and young people- Brenda Mallon

