

Bereavement and Loss

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Activity

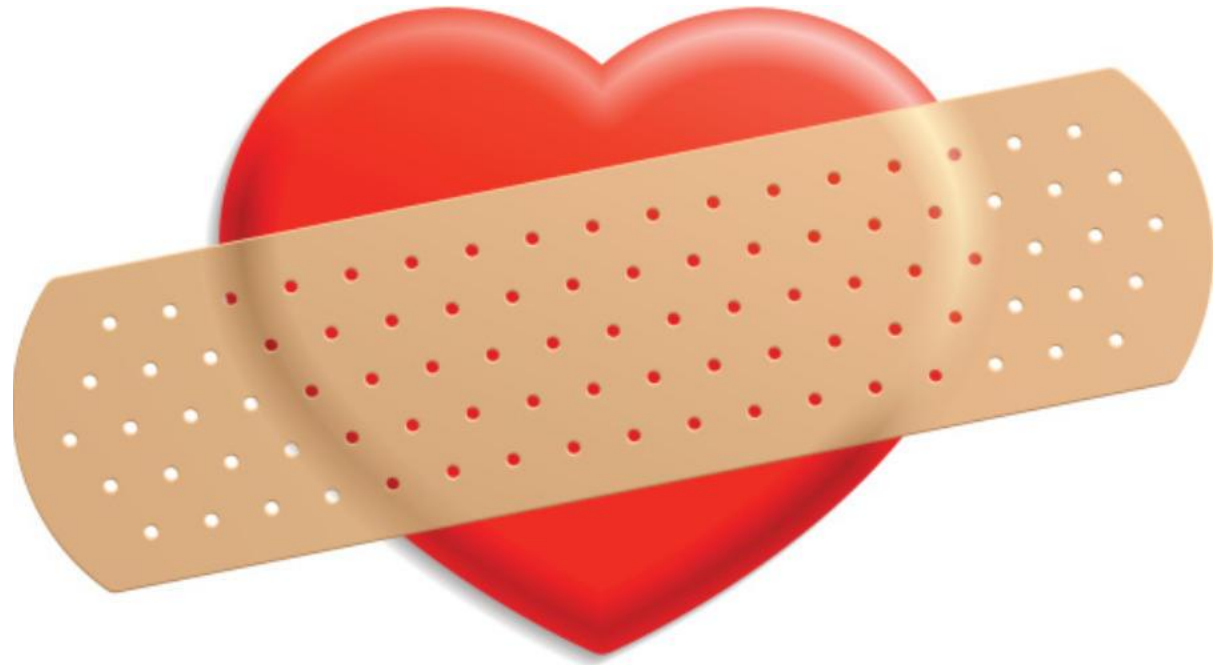


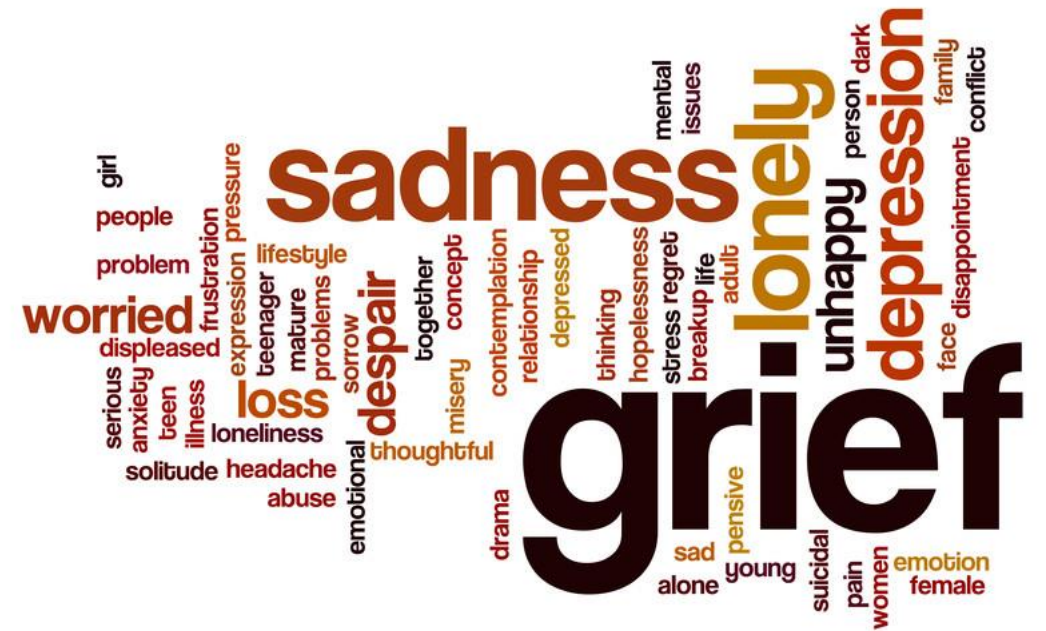
Aims for today

- Raise awareness of the impact of loss and bereavement in children's lives.
- Consider the process of grieving.
- Understand the developmental nature of children's responses to death.
- Increase confidence in supporting children who are bereaved.
- Provide strategies to support children in schools.



Health Warning





Definitions

Loss is the state of being deprived of someone or something that is valued (Howarth and Leaman 2001)

Bereavement is the experience of those left behind after someone has died (NCB 2007)

Grief is the expression of an individual's response to loss (Howarth and Leaman 2001)

THE **5** STAGES OF GRIEF



Denial



Anger



Bargaining



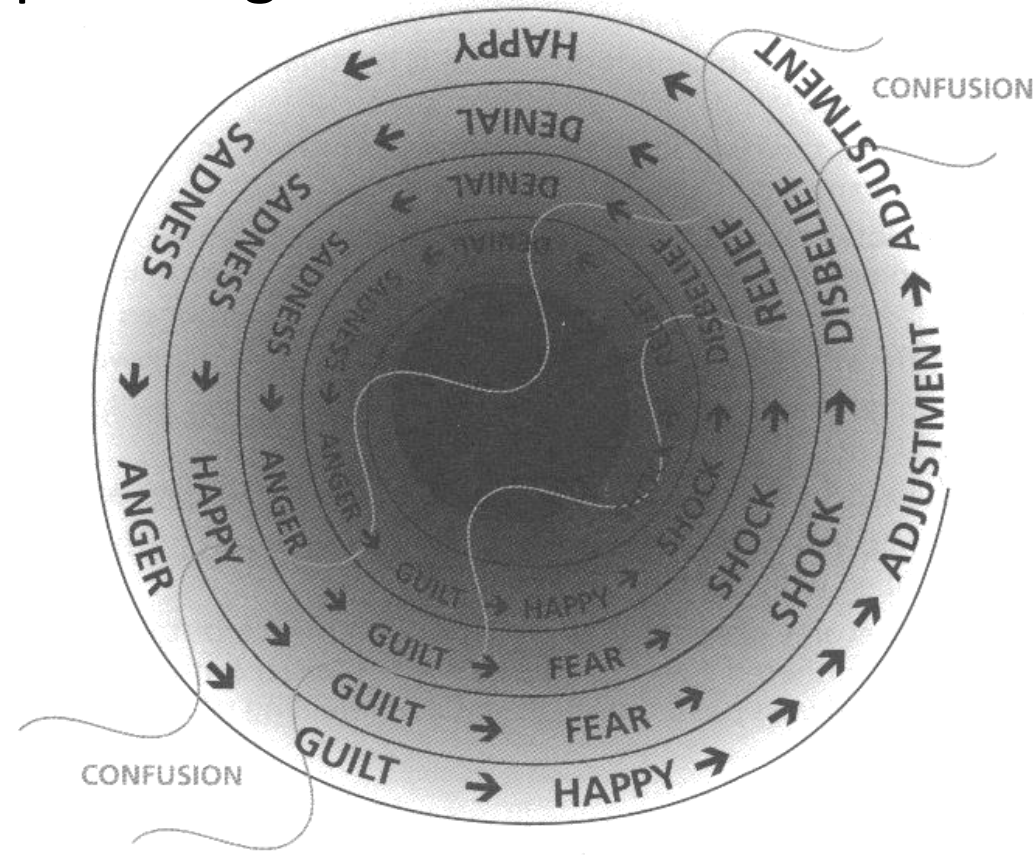
Depression



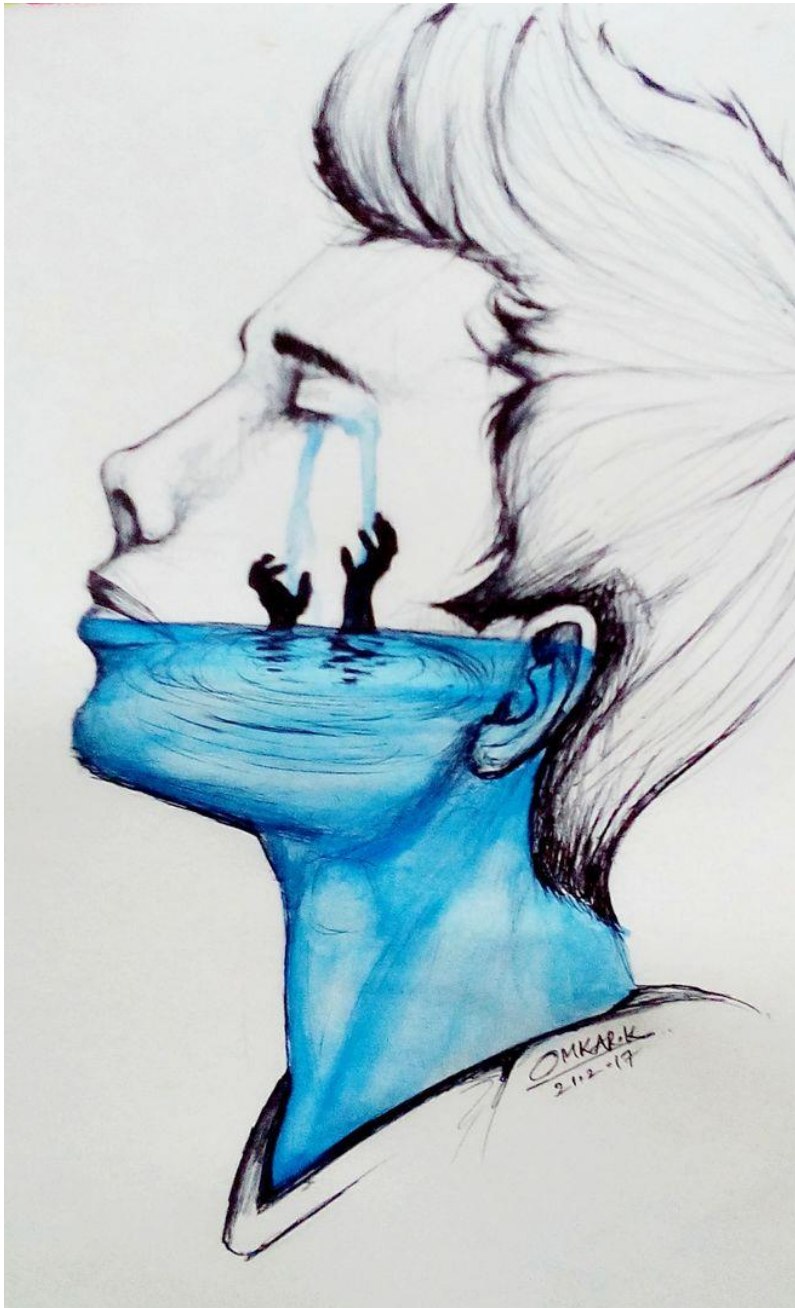
Acceptance

The Grieving Process

Upward spiral of grief:



Shelley Gilbert (2004)





- Every 22 minutes a parent of dependent children dies in the UK
- Up to 70% of schools have a bereaved pupil on their roll at any given time
- 92% of young people will experience a significant bereavement before the age of 16 years
- 1 in 25 children and young people have experienced bereavement of a parent or sibling
- 99,000 refugee children of compulsory school age in the UK
- 160,000 children experience a parent being sent to prison
- 175,000 children have parents in the armed forces

(Child Bereavement Network UK)



Why are we here today?

- Schools, healthcare and community settings with close child and family links, are well placed to support young people after bereavement.
- School is a usual place for a child to be and offers security at a time of insecurity.
- Staff working with children have many skills and techniques which they use routinely to help children and, with some further training and confidence building, these skills can be adapted to help children cope with a range of traumatic incidents.



Activity

What are the different types of loss that a child or young person may face?

Types of loss

- Death of a parent or primary caregiver
- Separation of parents
- Death of a sibling, relative or friend
- Moving house, class or school
- Moving country
- Serious illness of another person (friend, family, pet)
- Loss of a pet, favourite toy or object
- Having a parent in prison
- Parents in the military
- Early experiences e.g. attachment to primary caregiver (Bowlby, 1980)



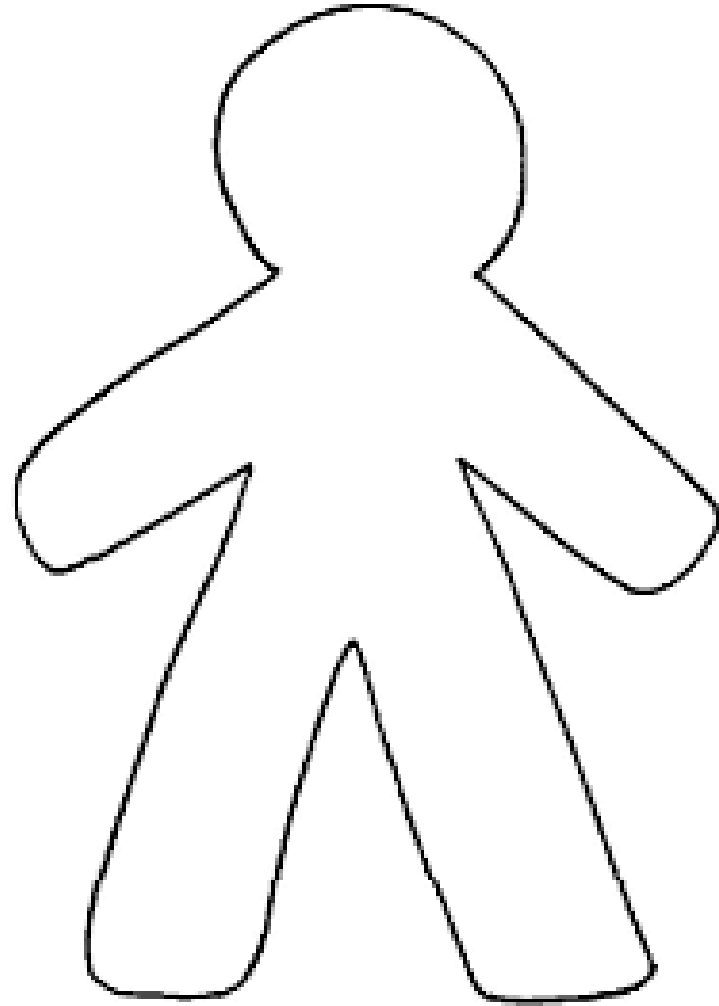


Developmental stages of understanding

- 0-2 years
- 2-5 years
- Primary school age
- Secondary school age

Activity

What symptoms or behaviours could tell us a child has experienced a bereavement or loss?



0-2 years

- Have no understanding of death.
- Are aware of separation and will grieve the absence of a parent or carer.
- May react to the absence of a parent or carer with increased crying, decreased responsiveness, and changes in eating or sleeping.
- May keep looking or asking for a missing parent or carer and wait for him or her to return.
- Are most affected by the sadness of surviving parent(s) and carer(s).



2-5 years

- Are curious about death and believe death is temporary or reversible.
- Are characterized by 'magical thinking' and understand the world as a mix of reality and fantasy.
- Are naturally egocentric and see themselves as the cause of events around them.
- Are still greatly affected by the sadness of surviving family members.
- Cannot put their feelings into words and instead react to loss through behaviours such as irritability, aggression, physical symptoms, difficulty sleeping, or regression (such as bed-wetting or thumb-sucking).



Primary school age

- Understand that death is final, but see it as something that happens only to other people.
- May think of death as a person or a spirit, like a ghost, angel, or a skeleton.
- Are often interested in the specific details of death and what happens to the body after death.
- May experience a range of emotions including guilt, anger, shame, anxiety, sadness, and worry about their own death.
- Continue to have difficulty expressing their feelings and may react through behaviours such as school phobia, poor performance in school, aggression, physical symptoms, withdrawal from friends, and regression.
- Still worry about who will take care of them and will likely experience insecurity, clinginess, and fear of abandonment.



Secondary school age

- Have an adult understanding of the concept of death, but do not have the experiences, coping skills, or behaviour of an adult.
- May 'act out' in anger or show impulsive or reckless behaviours, such as substance misuse or fighting in school.
- May experience a wide range of emotions, but not know how to handle them or feel comfortable expressing them.
- The reality of death contradicts a teenager's view of himself or herself as invincible, and teenagers may question their faith or their understanding of the world.
- Coping strategies may create tension with family members, as adolescents may cope by spending more time with friends or by withdrawing from the family to be alone.



Video

- <http://www.sad.scot.nhs.uk/bereavement/children-who-are-bereaved/>

Activity

How might children feel when they return to school after a bereavement?



Embarrassed



Ignored



Uncertain



Different



Isolated

Impact of loss

- Death and loss can impact profoundly on the behaviour and psychological health and well-being of young people.
- Children have a 'strong psychological need to 'fit in' and not be 'different' or abnormal' (Baker & Sedney, 1996)
- They may find that a lack of understanding by their peers is stressful (Silverman, 2000)
- Not show emotions in front of peers for fear of being different
- Other children may not have empathy of experience

Table 1. Changes in behaviour at school (Van Eerdewegh, Bieri, Parrilla, & Clayton, 1982; Van Eerdewegh, Clayton, & Van Eerdewegh, 1985).

Symptom	Behaviour
Dysphoria	Sadness, crying, irritability
Depressive	Withdrawal, sleep disturbance
Somatic	Accident prone, bed wetting
Behaviour	Temper tantrums, adverse behaviour
School problems	Loss of interest, school phobia, decline in performance

Behaviours can result in...

- Being out of school
- Unhelpful coping strategies
- Reduced capacity to learn
- Less concentration
- Reduced self-esteem
- Reduced academic achievement
- Increased risk of offending behaviour
- Increased incidence of teenage pregnancy
- Increased risk of developing psychological distress & the link with adult depression

(Glasgow City Council, 2013)



We need to consider...

- Developmental age
- Any additional needs
- Gender
- Context of loss or nature of death
- Attachment relationship
- Information made available
- Cultural/spiritual beliefs



Complex Grief

- Suicide, murder, accidental death
- Symptoms of post-trauma stress:
 - re-experiencing
 - avoidance
 - arousal



What makes it hard to talk about loss?

Tracey and Holland (2008)

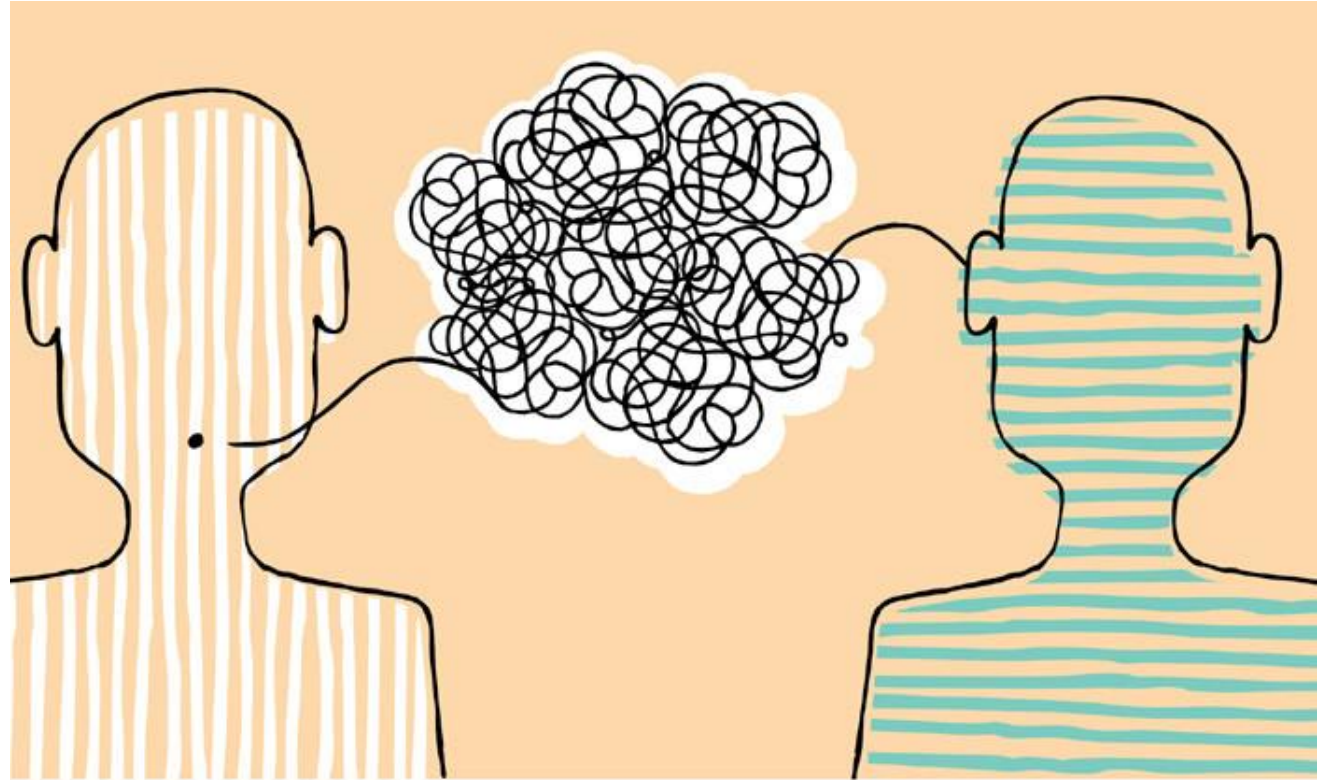
- Death seen as 'taboo'
- Uncomfortable talking to children
- Wanting to 'do the right thing'
- Lacking confidence or training
- 'Wary of causing upset'
- Want to support but unsure how to help



Activity



Communication



Policy



Child and young person support

- Listen
- Use clear language
- Information
- Sensitive to cultural / spiritual beliefs
- Support in ways they need



Activities

- Writing letters and poems
- Drawing pictures
- Making a display
- Sending off balloons
- Lighting a candle
- A memorial (for example, planting a tree,
- Memory box

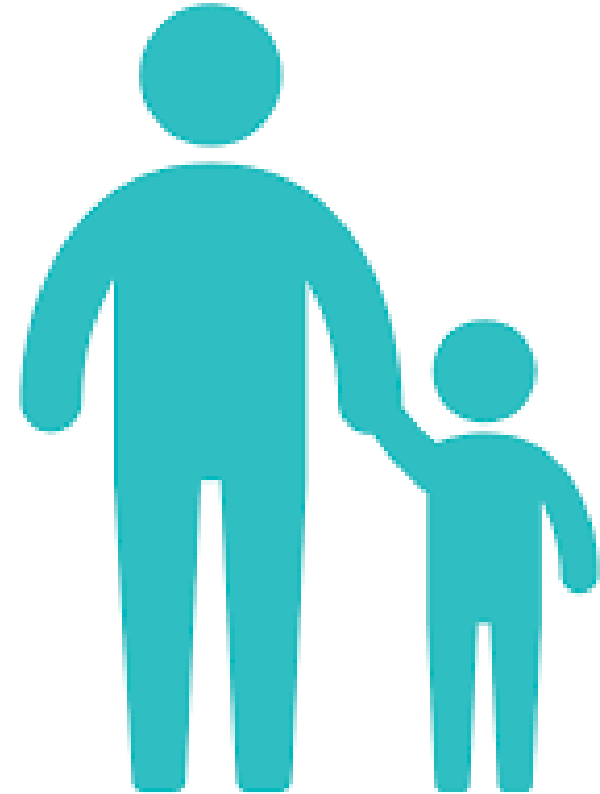


Memory box

- <https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/topics/grief/>

Parent support

- Listen
- Communication
- Signpost
- Share strategies
- Refer to school EP

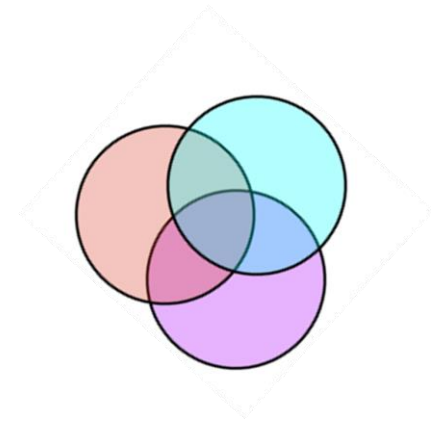


Psychological First Aid



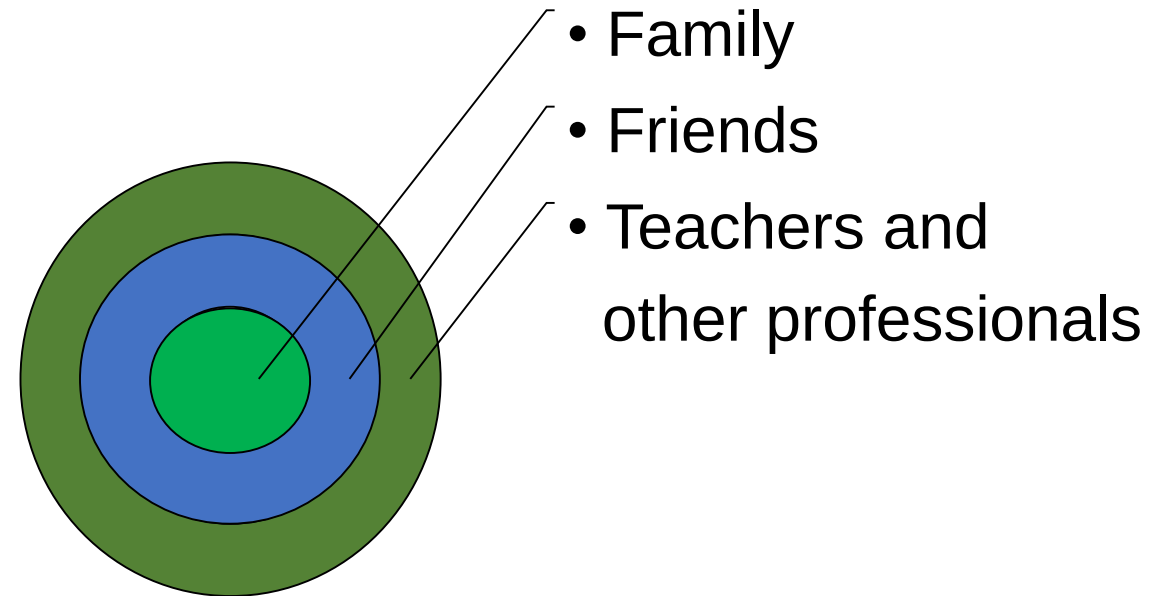
Resilience

- Resilience refers to the protective factors that can make it more likely for a child to deal with adversity while maintaining good mental health.
- Resilience can be enhanced by providing appropriate resources and experiences. These coping skills can be taught and learnt.



Risk and Resilience Factors

- Child Factors
- Family Factors
- Community and Cultural Factors
- School Factors
- Life Events and Situations



What to do...first

- ✓ Get the facts!
- ✓ Inform all staff, including absent, non-teaching staff, midday supervisors etc
- ✓ Sensitively express sympathy to the child, if they are in school, and family



What to do...next

- Meet child and discuss what peers should be told. Explain that although the children might not mention it this doesn't mean they don't care
- Inform peers about death and when child will return to school. Discuss what they might say (social story and script)
- Cards and other expressions of sympathy from classmates and others (e.g. flowers to family)
- Support child's views about viewing body/ attending funeral. Staff attendance at funeral?



What to do...later

- Quiet area for child, flexible use
- Named adult, regular check-ins
- Opportunities to express feelings safely
- Consideration at significant dates (e.g. Mothers Day, Christmas) and when choosing stories to share
- External support if concerns about wellbeing



Key points

Support

Nurture

Continuity

Kindness

Consideration

Whole child

Match to developmental stage

Plan the child's return to school

Consider special dates or events e.g. mother's day



What do children need?

- <https://childbereavementuk.org/what-is-grief/>

Websites for children and young people

- [CYPsomersethealth](#)
- [Riseabove.org.uk](#)
- [childbereavementuk.org/](#)
- [Themix.org.uk](#)
- [Kooth.com](#)
- [Young Minds](#)
- [Mind](#)
- [Rethink.org](#)





<http://www.josephinesstar.org.uk/>

[For Grieving Children and Families in Somerset](#)

Making each day count
St. Margaret's 
HOSPICE CARE

Resources

- Books

- Workbooks

- Sad Isn't Bad
- Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine
- When Something Terrible Happens
- When someone special dies



Sources of Support

- Wise Before the Event
- Coping with bereavement – a handbook for teachers
- Giving Sorrow Words
- Good Grief 2: Exploring Feelings, Loss and Death with Under 11's
- A Child's Grief: Supporting a child when someone in their family has died
- Help is at Hand: a resource for people bereaved by suicide and other sudden, traumatic death
- Cry of Pain: Understanding suicide and self-harm

Charity Sector Support

- Child Bereavement Charity
www.childbereavement.org.uk
- Child Death Helpline
www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk
- Childline NSPCC
www.childline.org.uk
- Compass
www.tsft.nhs.uk/gps-and-healthcare-professionals/departments/compass/
- Compassionate Friends
www.tcf.org.uk
- Cruse Bereavement Care
www.cruse.org.uk

- Local Cruse Branches: Somerset area
somerset@cruse.org.uk
- Mandala
www.barnardos.org.uk/mandala
- Papyrus
www.papyrus-uk.org
- Suicide Bereavement Support Service
mindtws.org.uk/somerset-suicide-bereavement-support/
- Samaritans
www.samaritans.org

- Responding to a suicide
www.samaritans.org/your-community/supporting-schools/step-step
- The Rainbow Centre for Children
www.rainbowcentre.org.uk
- Together for Short Lives
www.togetherforshortlives.org.uk/
- Winston's Wish
www.winstonswish.org
- Young Minds
www.youngminds.org.uk



Activity

Read the stories and discuss
what you might do to support
this child or young person

Key points to remember

- Babies can experience feelings of loss
- Be honest with the bereaved child or young person
- Avoid using metaphors for death
- Every child and young person's grief is unique
- Encourage the child or young person to talk about the death and how they feel
- Children and young people may 'revisit' the death and review their feelings about the bereavement as they develop
- Use language that is appropriate to the child or young person's age and level of comprehension.



One more minute

<https://childbereavementuk.org/for-families/family-stories/>

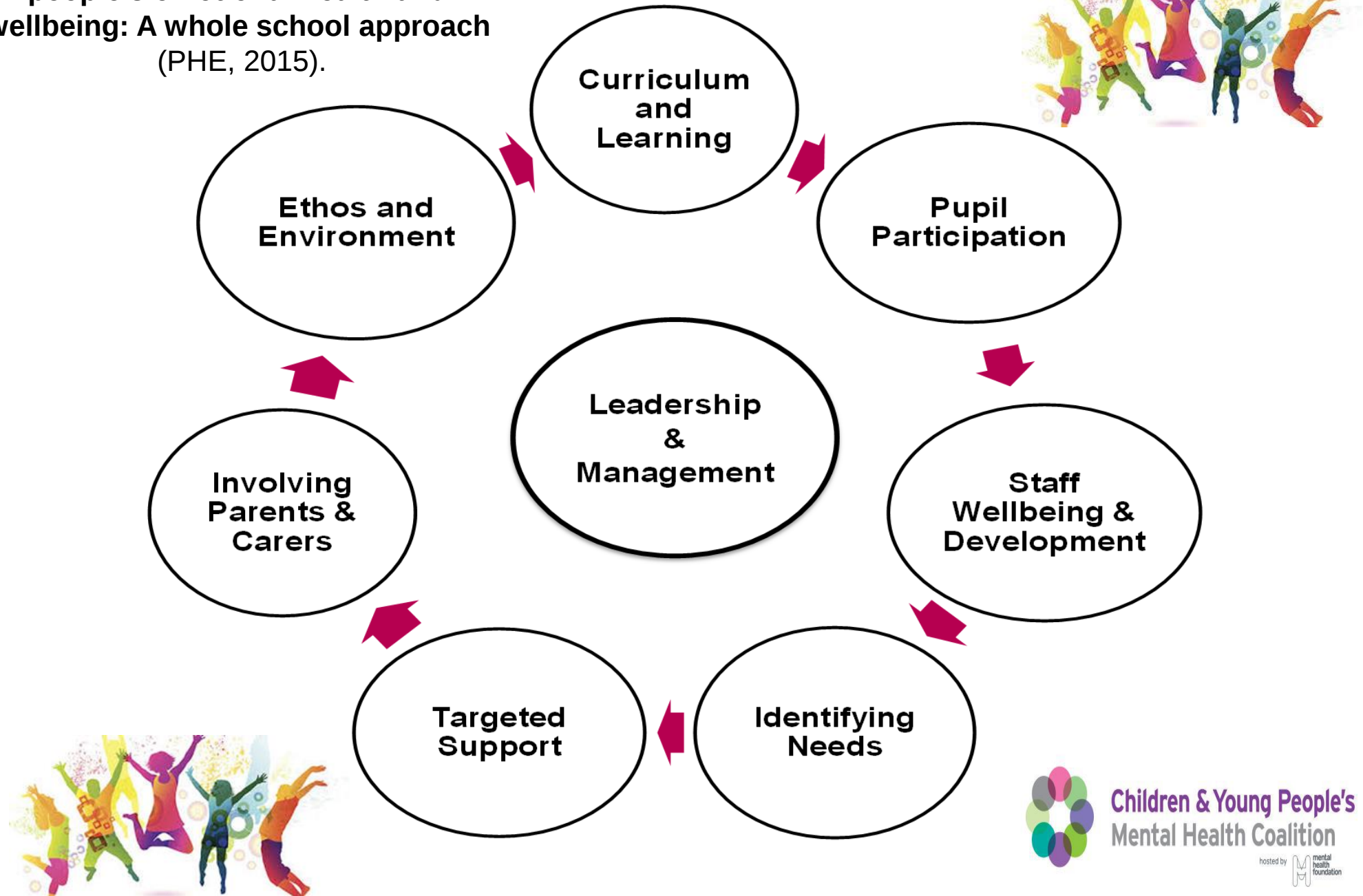
The Somerset Wellbeing Framework

Outcomes:

- To focus on ensuring effective practice and provision is in place that promotes the emotional wellbeing and mental health of both staff and pupils
- To change the long-term culture of schools and embed an ethos where mental health is regarded as everyone's business



Promoting children and young people's emotional health and wellbeing: A whole school approach
(PHE, 2015).



**Children & Young People's
Mental Health Coalition**

hosted by  **mental
health
foundation**

Support for Schools



- **Online Wellbeing Audit & Action Plan** – to assess the school against the evidence-based framework in relation to resources and needs
- **Guidance Materials** – to enable change and improvement
- **Resources & Training** – to support process and upskill staff
- **Commission & Provide Intervention** – including LIFEbeat PSHE CPD & Emotion Coaching
- **Specialist Support and Training** – Education Psychology Team, SHARE, School Nursing, Mental Health First Aid
- **Celebration & Recognition** – to acknowledge and reward good practice

Further details:



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Public Health Website

www.cypsomersethealth.org



Activity

How will you share what you have learnt today?



Thank you!

Remember the evaluation please

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