

Book Guide

Reading to help you cope
with grief and bereavement



Reading has the power to offer comfort, solace, and advice when we need it most.



At The Reading Agency, we know that reading can offer support when we lose someone.





This guide recommends books that can lend a hand in helping to understand and cope with grief, for yourself or those around you.

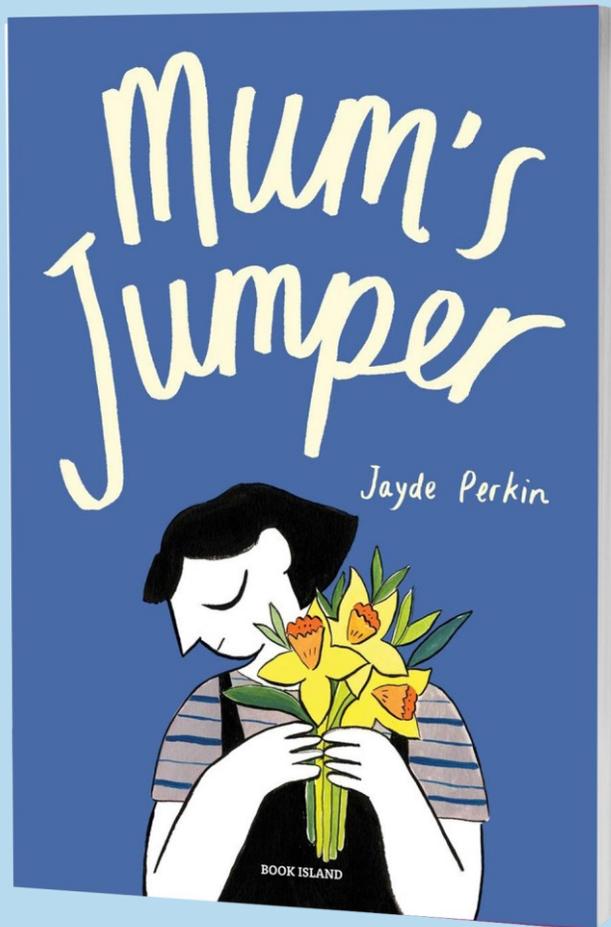


All the books included have been selected from three Reading Well programmes: for adults, young people, and children.



Books for children

Selected from [Reading Well for children](#)



Mum's Jumper by Jayde Perkin

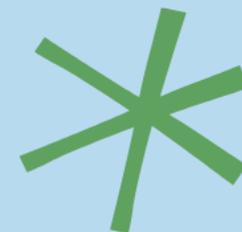
HB [9781911496137]

The story of a girl who loses her mum and has to learn how to keep going. Although her dad is there to support and comfort her, she's feeling very lonely – and angry. Through adopting her mum's jumper, she discovers that grief is something she will learn to grow with, and that there can be a way to feel hope for the future whilst living with loss. A beautifully illustrated, heartfelt, and ultimately uplifting book for anyone coping with loss.

Book Island

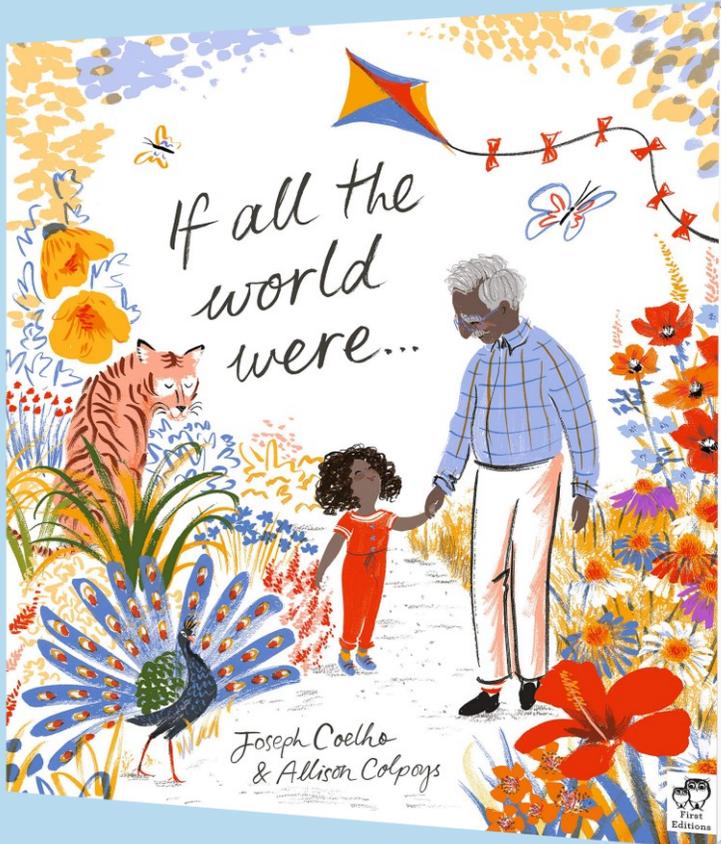


“I was very moved by this book. I was teary but relieved that the feelings of grief were so explicit and accessible to all! I am a Primary School teacher, and it will be featuring in my classroom. I aim to teach children about empathy and mental health. This book is perfect!”



Books for children

Reading Well for children provides quality-assured information, stories and advice to support children's mental health and wellbeing.



If All the World Were... by Joseph Coelho

Illustrator Allison Colpoys

PB [9781786036513]

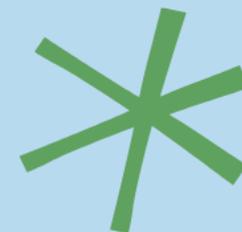
EB [9781786033925]

A moving, lyrical picture book about a young girl's love for her granddad and how she copes when he dies. This beautifully illustrated, powerful and ultimately uplifting text is the ideal way to introduce children to the concept of death and dying, particularly children who have lost a grandparent.

Lincoln Children's Books

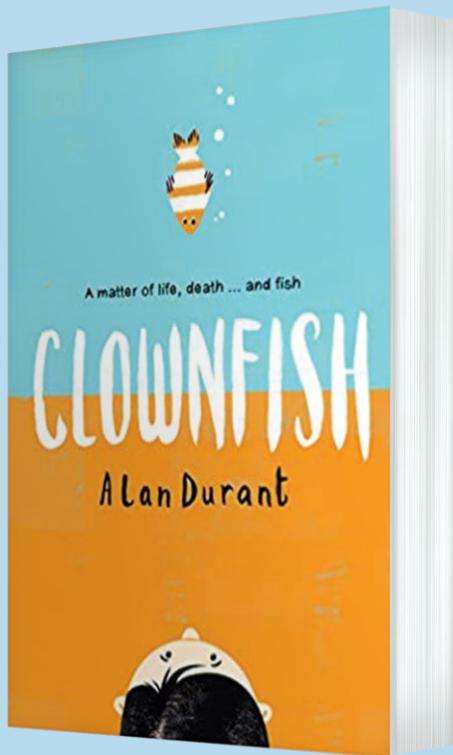


“Great for children dealing with bereavement, but also just a beautiful story to share with the little ones that you love.”



Books for children

The Reading Well for children booklist has been chosen and recommended by leading health professionals and co-produced with children and families.

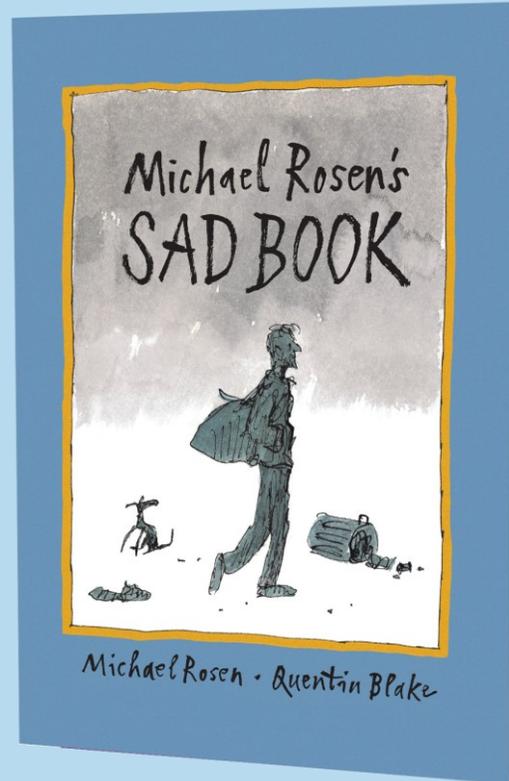


Clownfish by Alan Durant

PB [9781406374629]
EB [9781406381900]

Dak's dad has been dead for seven days when suddenly he reappears. He's the same in almost every way, with one startling exception: Dad has turned into a clownfish, and now lives in a tank at their local aquarium. Dak visits him at the aquarium and ends up spending so much time there that they offer him a job. When the aquarium is threatened with closure, the stakes couldn't be higher for Dak.

Walker Books



Michael Rosen's Sad Book by Michael Rosen

Illustrator Quentin Blake

PB [9781406317848]

Michael Rosen's Sad Book chronicles Michael's grief at the death of his son Eddie from meningitis at the age of 19. A moving combination of sincerity and simplicity, it acknowledges that sadness is not always avoidable or reasonable and perfects the art of making complicated feelings plain.

Walker Books

Books for young people

Selected from [Reading Well for young people's mental health](#)



Kite Spirit by Sita Brahmachari

[PB] 9780330517928
[EB] 9781447217787

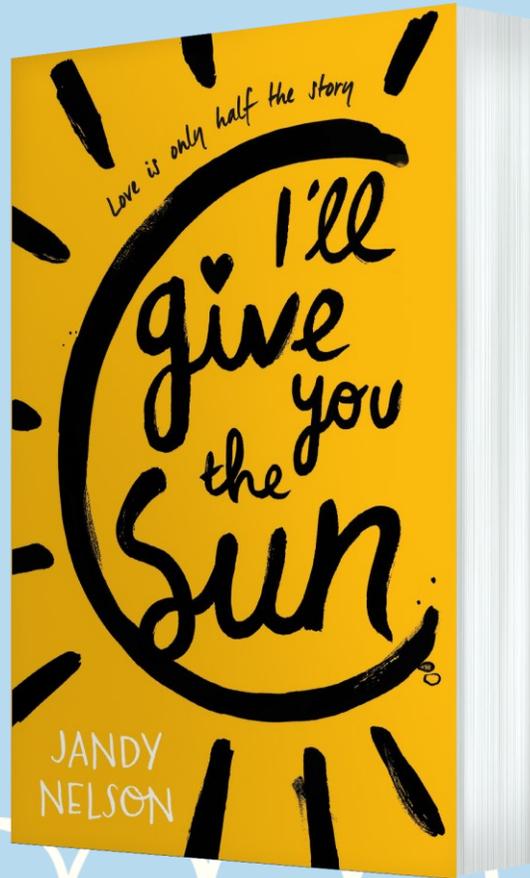
During the summer of her GCSEs Kite's world falls apart. Her best friend, Dawn, commits suicide after a long struggle with feeling under pressure to achieve. Kite's dad takes her to the Lake District, to give her time and space to grieve. It's not until she meets local boy, Garth, that Kite begins to open up. A potent story about grief, friendship, acceptance and making your heart whole again.

Macmillan Children's Books

Reading Well for young people recommends expert endorsed books about mental health, providing 13 to 18 year olds with advice and information about issues like anxiety, stress and OCD, and difficult experiences like bullying and exams.

Books for young people

Selected from [Reading Well for young people's mental health](#)



I'll Give You the Sun by Jandy Nelson

[PB] 9781406326499

[EB] 9781406361735

[AB] 9781455849406

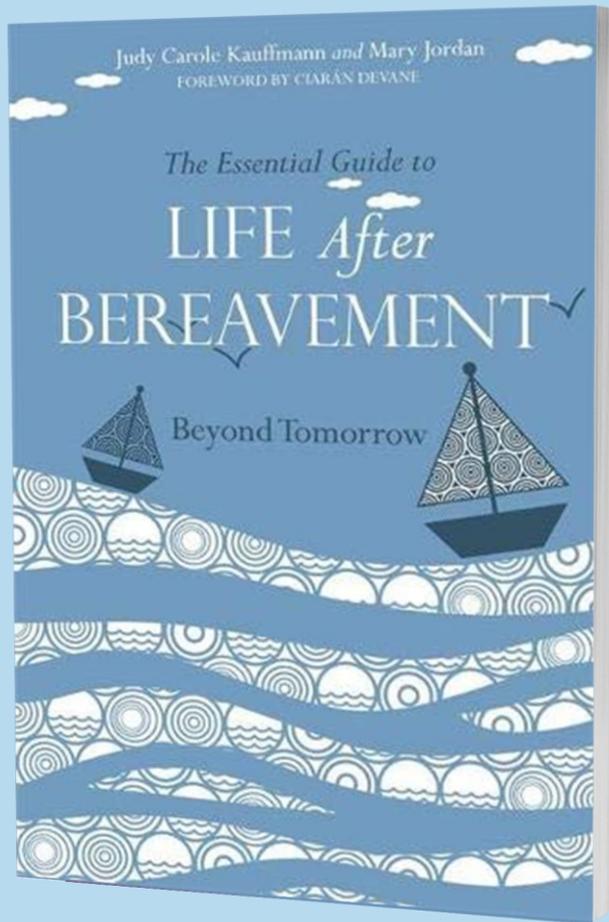
From the author of *The Sky Is Everywhere*, a radiant novel that will leave you laughing and crying – all at once. For fans of John Green, Gayle Forman and Lauren Oliver. Jude and her twin Noah were incredibly close – until a tragedy drove them apart. Then Jude meets a cocky, broken, beautiful boy as well as a captivating new mentor, both of whom may just need her as much as she needs them. What the twins don't realize is that each of them has only half the story and if they can just find their way back to one another, they have a chance to remake their world.

Walker Books

The books have all been recommended by young people and health professionals.

Books for adults

Selected from [Reading Well for mental health](#)



The Essential Guide to Life After Bereavement: Beyond Tomorrow
by Judy Carole Kauffmann, Mary Jordan

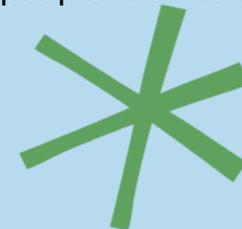
[PB] 9781849053358

[EB] 9780857006691

This book acts as a supportive map through the initial period of loss, and through the weeks and months that follow. The authors address the emotional aspects of bereavement, but also important and often overlooked practical considerations such as dealing with wills and other paperwork, personal possessions, making arrangements for funerals and memorial services, coping with the anniversaries of a death and resolving family conflict. Drawing on many real examples, they offer compassionate, realistic advice on dealing with guilt and other negative emotions, as well as helpful guidance on how and when to break the news of a death to others, including to children, people with learning disabilities and people with dementia.

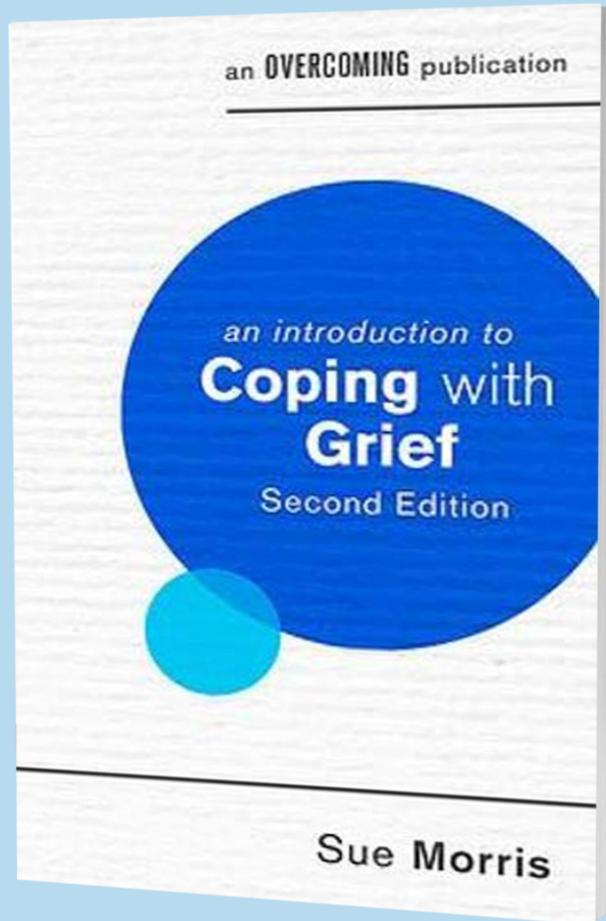
Penguin Books

Reading Well for mental health provides helpful information and support for managing common mental health conditions, or dealing with difficult feelings and experiences.



Books for adults

Selected from [Reading Well for mental health](#)



An Introduction to Coping with Grief, 2nd Edition by Sue Morris

[PB] 9781472140081

[EB] 9781472140098

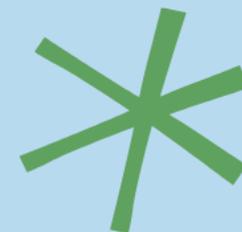
Grief is a natural reaction to loss but it can be devastating, preventing you from moving on in your life and affecting your relationships and work. This fully updated self-help guide offers an examination and explanation of the grieving process and outlines clinically-proven strategies, based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), to help you adjust to life without a loved one.

Little Brown Book Group

The books are chosen by health experts and people living with the conditions covered.

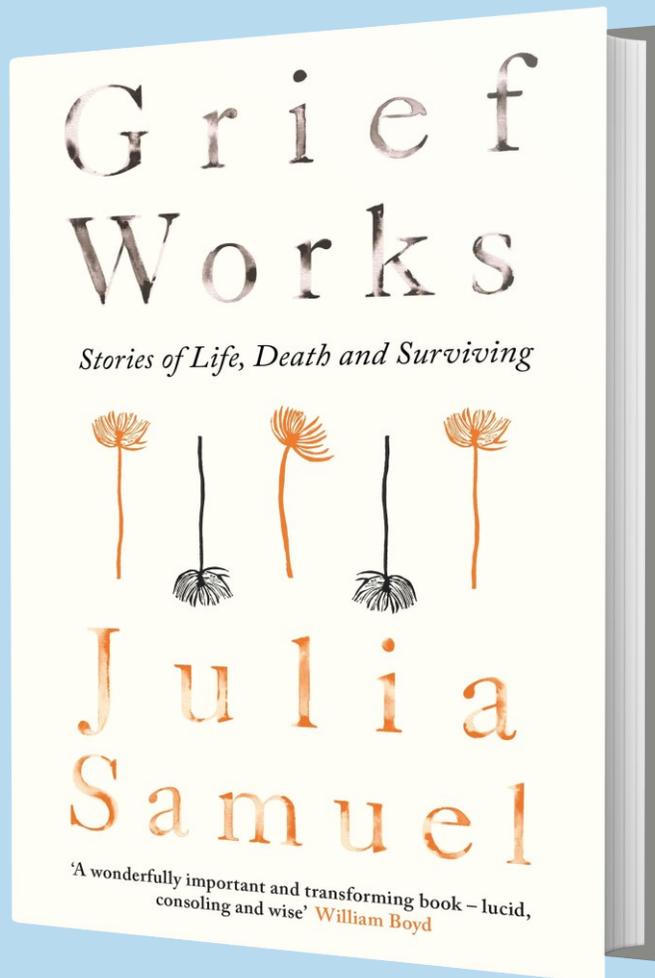


“There was so much advice in the book that I now feel like I can go away and use that advice to cope better. There were also many activities for you to do yourself which can help the process of grief.”



Books for adults

Selected from [Reading Well for mental health](#)



Grief Works: Stories of Life, Death and Surviving by Julia Samuel

[PB] 9780241270776

[EB] 9780241270752

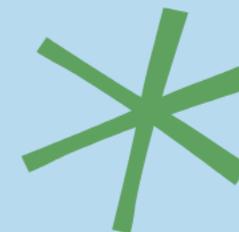
[AB] 9780241980569

So many of us feel awkward and uncertain around death, and shy away from talking honestly with family and friends. *Grief Works* is a compassionate guide that will inform and engage anyone who is grieving, from the 'expected' death of a parent to the sudden unexpected death of a small child, and provide clear advice for those seeking to comfort the bereaved.

Penguin Books

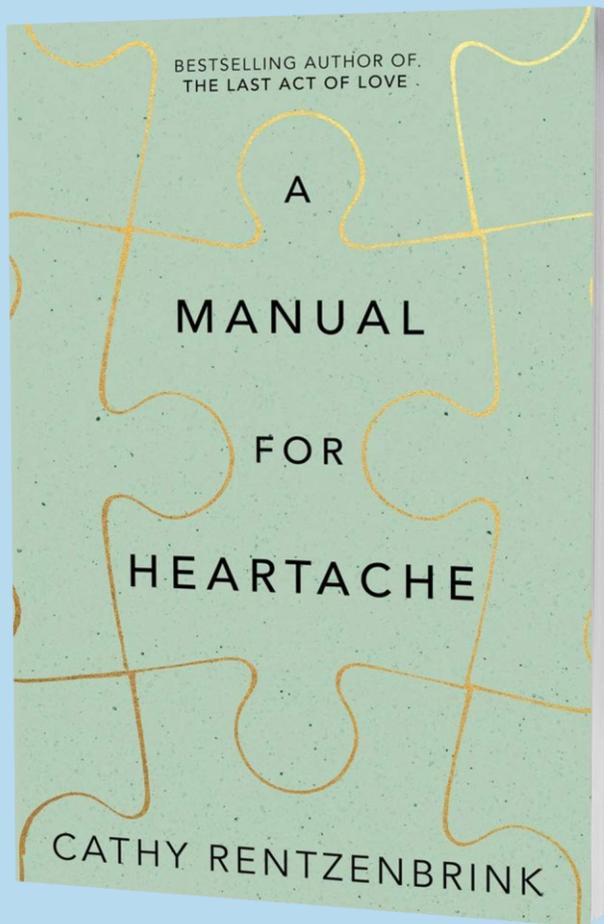


"I bought this book just a week after my father passed away. It helped me to accept what happened faster, I'm still in the process of recovering, but at least thanks to this book and plenty of meditation I'm managing better than expected."



Books for adults

Selected from [Reading Well for mental health](#)



A Manual for Heartache by Cathy Rentzenbrink

[PB] 9781509824465

[EB] 9781509824441

[AB] 9781509844869

When Cathy Rentzenbrink was still a teenager, her family was torn apart by an unthinkable tragedy. She describes how she learnt to live with grief and loss and find joy in the world again. She explores how to cope with life at its most difficult and overwhelming and how we can emerge from suffering forever changed but filled with hope.

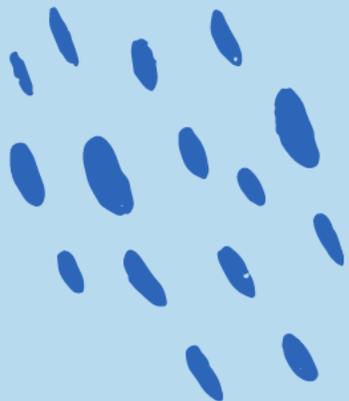
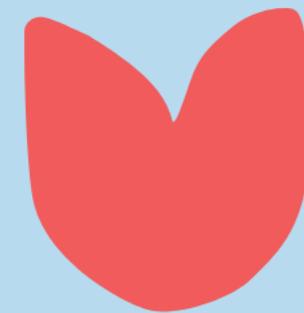
This is a moving, warm and uplifting book that offers solidarity and comfort to anyone going through a painful time, whatever it might be. It's a book that will help to soothe an aching heart and assure its readers that they're not alone.

Pan Macmillan

“A Manual for Heartache is a book that could change the life of someone whose hands it finds its way into at the right moment. I wish I could go back and give it to my younger self at various points in my own life.”



Coping with grief



**Grief is a natural process,
but it can be devastating.**

**Is this normal? I feel angry.
I feel sad. I feel nothing.**

**It's important to know
that you are not alone.**

**There is no 'right'
way to grieve.**



We're often told there are set stages to the grieving process.

But in reality, everyone experiences grief differently and there is no timeline for grief.

Cruse Bereavement Care prefers to understand people's experiences as 'growing around grief'



Losing someone can affect you deeply. Sometimes the experience changes depending on the relationship you had with the person.

You can [access specific support and information](#) for your grief experience with the bereavement organisations listed in this guide.

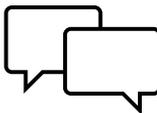


Get help

Cruse Bereavement Care offers a range of free booklets, guides and leaflets on bereavement and coping with grief for [adults](#) and for [children, young people and their carers](#).

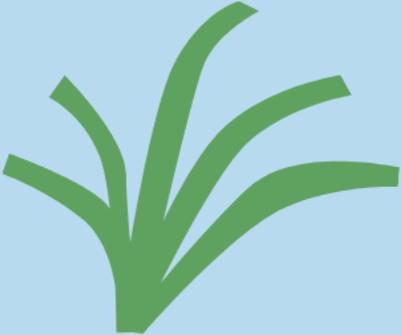


[Cruse National Helpline](#)
0808 808 1677



[Cruse Chat](#)
Chat directly with a bereavement counsellor





**Organisations
working to support
bereavement**



Online directories of local and national bereavement support organisations throughout the UK:

At A Loss

The UK's signposting website for the bereaved. A comprehensive directory can be searched for bereavement services to find support according to the circumstances of your loss, the relationship, age and/or geographical location.



The Good Grief Trust

The Good Grief Trust is run by the bereaved for the bereaved. They provide a helpful directory of organisations offering bereavement support across the UK. You can find services available according to who you have lost and add location to find nearby support organisations.





Organisations working to support bereavement:

For all ages

Cruse Bereavement Care

Cruse Bereavement Care is the leading national charity for bereaved adults and children in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Provides one-to-one support to anyone who has suffered bereavement, together with a telephone helpline. Their website gives further information and contact details for local branches.

For anyone who's lost a partner

WAY

Widowed and Young is a UK charity that offers a peer-to-peer support network for anyone who's lost a partner before their 51st birthday – married or not, with or without children, whatever their sexual orientation.





Organisations working to support bereavement:

For families

[The Compassionate Friends](#)

TCF is an organisation of bereaved parents and their families offering understanding, support and encouragement to others after the death of a child or children. They also offer support, advice and information to other relatives, friends and professionals who are helping the family.

For children

[Winston's Wish](#)

Winston's Wish was the UK's first childhood bereavement charity. They support bereaved children and young people up to the age of 18 through a range of activities, including a helpline, group work, residential events and resources.





Projects supporting bereavement:

For young people

Let's Talk About Loss

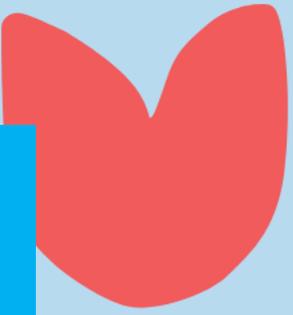
Let's Talk About Loss runs peer-led meet up groups in cities across the UK to connect young adults who have all experienced loss and are looking for others who understand. They run a bereavement book club, creative writing group and grief workshops.

For everyone

Death Cafes

Death Cafes are local groups of people getting together to drink tea, eat cake and discuss death. They are run entirely by volunteers. Find your nearest Death Cafe on their [website](#).





Thanks for reading – we
hope this guide helps!



If you have a question, please email us
at readingwell@readingagency.org.uk

Looking for help right now?

If someone needs support urgently or are in crisis, the following organisations are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:

childline

Call: 0800 1111
[email](#) | [online chat](#)

Childline's trained counsellors are there to help anyone under 19 in the UK with any issue they're going through.

Childline is free, confidential and available any time, day or night.

SAMARITANS

Call: 116 123
[email](#) | [write](#)

Samaritans is a safe place to talk about whatever's getting to you.

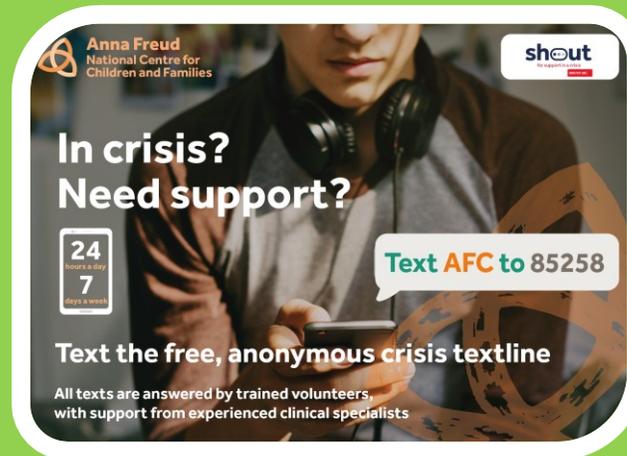
Samaritans is free, confidential and available 24/7 for people of any age across the UK and Republic of Ireland.

Emergency Services

Call: 999

If you are concerned that your life or the life of someone else is in danger, you can call 999 anywhere in the UK for an ambulance, police, fire brigade or any other emergency service any time of the day or night.

AFC Crisis Messenger



Anna Freud
National Centre for
Children and Families

shout

In crisis?
Need support?

24
hours a day
7
days a week

Text AFC to 85258

Text the free, anonymous crisis textline

All texts are answered by trained volunteers,
with support from experienced clinical specialists

This is a free, confidential, 24/7 text message support service for anyone who is feeling overwhelmed or is struggling to cope. If you need support, you can **text AFC to 85258**.

You can find details of more organisations that offer help and support for young people about a variety of issues on the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families' website here: annafreud.org/on-my-mind/urgent-help

THE READING AGENCY

Find out more:

www.readingagency.org.uk

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TACKLING LIFE'S BIG CHALLENGES THROUGH THE PROVEN POWER OF READING