

# healthy care briefing

## Healthy Care

This briefing is for a range of practitioners who are involved in Healthy Care Partnerships, including social care, health, education and other children's services. It:

- identifies the importance of recognising the impact of bereavement and loss on looked after children and young people and of providing support to enable them to cope with this
- provides examples of how Healthy Care Partnerships are supporting looked after children and young people who have experienced bereavement
- offers signposts to resources and other information.

The Healthy Care Programme, funded by the Department of Children, Schools and Families, is a practical means of improving the health of looked after children and young people, in line with the Department of Health's guidance Promoting the Health of Looked After Children (2002), Every Child Matters and the Change for Children Programme, and Care Matters: Time for Change (2007). Through partnership working, policy development and with the participation of looked after children and young people, the programme ensures that services are child-focused, provide a healthy care environment and support the National Healthy Care Standard.

## The National Healthy Care Standard

This standard is based on a child and young person's entitlement to:

- appreciation, love, respect and consistency
- a safe, protective and healthy care environment
- opportunities to develop personal and social skills to enable them to care for their health and well-being now and in the future
- effective healthcare, assessment, treatment and support.

Find out more at:

[www.ncb.org.uk/healthycare](http://www.ncb.org.uk/healthycare)

**All looked after children and young people experience loss of some kind; for some this includes the death of someone close to them. They need sensitive and timely care and support to manage the impact of bereavement throughout their childhood and into adulthood.**

# Bereavement, loss and children and young people in care

Bereavement and loss are among the most painful and affecting experiences that any of us will face. Children and young people in care experience a variety of separations and losses in their lives: all have been separated from their birth family. For some, their experiences of loss will include the death of someone close to them, and this can have a profound effect on their health, well-being and relationships. Adults find bereavement and loss difficult to deal with too and this can make it hard for carers and professionals to respond to the needs of bereaved children and young people in their care. A recent literature review showed how bereavement can be particularly problematic in life situations that are already difficult.

'For some young people ... bereavement may be compounded by other disadvantages or multiple difficult life events, and this may clearly indicate an increased risk of negative outcomes. Furthermore bereavement and multiple losses are much more likely to be experienced by young people who are already disadvantaged, but these young people are less likely to have organised support available to them.'  
(Ribbens McCarthy and Jessop 2005, p.64)

**Loss** is the state of being deprived of someone or something that is valued (Howarth and Leaman, 2001, in Rowling, 2003).

**Bereavement** is the experience of those left behind after someone has died.

**Grief** is the expression of an individual's response to loss (Howarth and Leaman, 2001, in Rowling, 2003).

This briefing draws on a 2006 study by the Childhood Bereavement Network (CBN), published in 2007 as *Grief Matters for Children* by Alison Penny. The study consulted looked after children and young people, foster carers, residential and secure unit staff, and social care professionals across England about their experiences of bereavement and loss, and their support needs.

## Children and young people's experience of bereavement

The limited statistics that are available about children and young people's experiences of death tell us that 4 per cent of five- to 16-year-olds have experienced the death of a parent, brother or sister (Green, 2004) and many more have experienced the death of a close family member, such as a grandparent, friend or teacher.

## Children and young people in care and bereavement

A recent Swedish study found that many more 18-year-olds who had been fostered during childhood had experienced the death of a parent (26 per cent) than those who grew up in their birth families (4 per cent) (Franzen and Vinnerljung, 2006). No similar studies exist in the UK, but professionals consulted as part of the CBN study believed that looked after children and young people were more likely to have experienced the death of someone close to them. They cited drug and alcohol misuse and other risk-taking behaviour, poor general health, severe emotional and mental health problems, domestic violence and involvement in crime as contributing factors to higher mortality rates – and greater proportions of sudden and traumatic deaths – among the birth families and friends of looked after children and young people. Some of these factors are similar to those that could have led to a child or young person becoming looked after in the first place. In addition, some children and young people come into care because of the death of a parent and absence of other family members to look after them. This highlights the importance of planning for the care of children and young people who experience the death of a lone parent.

It is not just the death of a parent or sibling which has the potential to affect a child or young person: as the CBN study shows, children and young people in care can be deeply affected by the death of a grandparent, friend, neighbour or foster carer, often because the person had been involved in parenting the child and were thus very significant to them.

## The impact of bereavement

Bereavement affects children and young people physically, practically and emotionally. Its effects can be felt for many years and can impact on all areas of their lives and relationships.

Reactions identified as common among bereaved children and young people (not specifically those who are looked after) include:

- sleep disturbances, insomnia, nightmares
  - eating disorders, loss of appetite
  - toilet problems: they may regress to soiling or wetting
  - new physical disorders, or exacerbation of existing ones, such as asthma and eczema
  - anxiety, separation anxiety, mood swings, withdrawal, aggressive behaviours, school phobia
  - poor concentration
  - possible guilt problems: thinking they are responsible for the loss
  - loss of memory, learning difficulties
  - hyperactivity, acting out, taking risks.
- (Chan and McConigley in Cousins and others 2003, p.63)

Children and young people, carers and professionals consulted by the CBN study reported similar reactions. They described behaviours and feelings, such as aggression, being withdrawn, self-harming, suicide, eating disorders, wetting themselves, vomiting, clinginess, poor memory and, in some cases, symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. Young people particularly reported headaches, aches and pains, difficulty sleeping, difficulty concentrating at school, back pain, eating problems, itchy skin and finding themselves prone to bursts of anger.

'You can feel really, really upset and you feel really angry like you want to smash something up.'

Young person, quoted in Catcher Media, 2007

Following a traumatic experience, such as witnessing an accident, or even the murder of one parent by another, children and young people may develop a variety of stress reactions (Yule 2005). These can include intrusive thoughts about what has happened, flashbacks, separation difficulties, problems concentrating, difficulties in talking with parents, carers and friends, and heightened fears and anxiety about safety. Studies suggest that children and young people who are bereaved through the murder or suicide of a parent are at greater risk of depression and of post-traumatic stress disorder (Dowdney 2000).

This is an extract from a poem written by a group of young people from Y-Plan, Young People Looked After Network, Gloucestershire, as part of a film project with Catcher Media about their experiences of loss and grief.

*A thousand daggers twist in my guts,  
the hurt like spiders crawling up my  
throat,  
worry wriggles under my skin.  
My legs are stiff as steel,  
My arms are stiff as trees.  
My eyes puff up like bags of crisps  
ready to be popped  
Stomach an erupting volcano  
Numb body full of ice,  
Mouth is clamped shut  
My head holds an electric storm  
Body frozen, everything stops  
and my eyes just stare.  
(Catcher Media, 2007)*

## Loss and being in care

Looked after children and young people experience a variety of separations and losses in their lives. All of them were separated from their birth families when they entered the care system. As well as being separated from parents, this can involve being uprooted from siblings and extended family, their homes, their school and friends, a familiar neighbourhood, pets, toys, possessions and the familiarity of home. Children and young people experience this as a loss, no matter how difficult or harmful the family or home circumstances were. The loss of a fostering placement can also be distressing for a child, even if difficulties led to the breakdown of a placement – it is one more loss to add to the others.

Carers and professionals who contributed to the CBN study thought that the losses experienced by children and young people in care could add to and make more acute the impact of the death of someone close.

'Losses through death add to the continued significant losses of family, school, peers and childhood that are a factor for all looked after children.'  
Looked after children's nurse, CBN study

Aspects of life in care affect the way children and young people experience bereavement. Problems with contact can mean that a child doesn't have time to prepare for a death even when others

are expecting it, or that the news is relayed in a way they find difficult. They can feel isolated from the rest of their grieving family, and anxious about surviving relatives who they don't often see. Children may have feelings of anger or guilt towards their birth family and when an ambivalent relationship is ruptured by death, grief can understandably be complicated. If the dead person was abusive or neglectful, it can be difficult for carers to acknowledge the sadness and longing of a child or young person's grief. Carers' attempts to offer support can be hampered if they don't know the full circumstances of a death, and some children and young people will have experienced bereavements of which their carers are unaware. Placement instability can mean that children and young people lose 'potentially supportive ongoing relationships with professionals' (Healthy Care Partnership, CBN study).

### Attachment and loss

Looked after children and young people have often had difficult experiences within their birth families and may not have had the close, loving relationships that enable children and young people to feel secure and to grow and develop. The separation of a child from their main caregiver causes the child intense distress, regardless of whether this happens suddenly and traumatically – as through death – or over a period of time through family breakdown, abuse or the caregiver's unavailability due to drug misuse or mental health problems.

The strategies that the child or young person develops to manage this situation can lead to behavioural or emotional difficulties that affect their ability to form healthy and trusting relationships, both in childhood and later life. The term 'attachment difficulties' is often used to describe such behaviour (Healthy Care 2006; Schofield and Beek 2005). In turn, these attachment difficulties can compromise children and young people's ability to seek support to deal with the impact of further losses, and can pose challenges for their carers.

'The losses [my son] has experienced have led to challenging behaviour and it is difficult to care for someone with such intense needs.'  
Foster carer, CBN study (Penny 2007)

'Loss of a parent, however negative they may have been, has a major impact upon a young person's relationship with other adults who are caring for them. They often believe that all adults they care about will leave them or die and they will often attempt to destroy these relationships before this happens. Therefore they often move from place to place not forming attachments.'  
Secure children's home staff member, CBN study

### Children and young people in secure accommodation

Children and young people placed in local authority secure children's homes will face many of the issues already discussed in dealing with bereavement. However, the setting in which they find themselves can bring additional challenges that affect their experience and their ability to access support.

Young people consulted at Aldine House, a secure children's centre, felt that all young people's experiences of loss mattered. However, they said that the secure setting brought extra dimensions of loss into their lives, which included:

- loss of liberty and freedom
- relationships – emotional, sexual or intimate – with boyfriends/girlfriends, pets, friends and family
- privacy: particularly conversation between themselves
- choice: not seeing family and friends when they want, not being able to eat when they want or sometimes what they want
- interaction: within the community
- family: not being able to see or be with family every day
- normality: not being able to do what 'normal' young people can do
- social life: having fun, meeting friends
- love: intimacy through touch, hugging and kissing.

Many of these losses thwart the coping strategies that children and young people might otherwise use to get comfort and reassurance at times of great stress, such as when someone close dies.

Children and young people in secure accommodation are likely to be placed some way from home, making it more difficult for them to be involved in any family remembrances and funeral arrangements.

'My Gran died five months ago. I was not allowed to go to the funeral even though it meant so much to me to say goodbye ... I should have been allowed to go to the funeral. I will never get my chance to say goodbye now, and I am really angry about that. Obviously staff in units like this should make plans for young people like me to be accompanied to funerals, no matter how far from the unit.'  
Young woman in a medium secure psychiatric unit, CBN study

Children and young people in secure units talked about the need for young people to be able to express feelings of anger in safe ways, e.g. by 'kicking a ball, screaming, etc.' and for the boundaries to be relaxed a little so that they could have some 'grieving time'. The value of having someone to listen and talk to was also highlighted. Some secure children's homes are providing training for staff on bereavement and loss and developing programmes of work with children and young people (see Case Study 2 about the Atkinson Unit). Their aim is to enable all staff to be able to respond to issues around bereavement and loss. Several local authority secure children's homes responding to the CBN study mentioned that children and young people had access to telephone helplines and were offered support from external agencies.

### Unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people

Many unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people will have experienced not only separation from their family but also the death of someone close to them, often in traumatic circumstances that they may have witnessed. Language and cultural difference can make it difficult for young people to talk about the fear and anxieties that they may feel in their new and often uncertain circumstances. It is not uncommon for these young people to experience post-traumatic stress disorder.

In some cultures, mental health difficulties are understood and dealt with differently so some young people may not be interested in a referral for counselling or other support as it is simply outside of their realm of experience. They may also not be emotionally ready for such help or may be overwhelmed with trying to get used

to their new life. Carers and professionals will need additional support and training to help them care for these young people. This will include knowing about different cultural and religious practices around death as well as knowing how to support children and young people who have experienced trauma and loss, in culturally appropriate and sensitive ways.

## How to help

Although much has been written about grief and the grieving process, the literature deals more with adult responses to death or major life changes than with bereavement in childhood. Commentators caution that each child and young person will have a unique response to grief, depending on their individual circumstances, their stage of development and the emotional and practical resources that are available to them.

However, there is agreement about how important it is for children and young people to be allowed to grieve and reflect on their loss in their own way that will enable them eventually to make sense of it. Carers must make sure that when they are talking to bereaved children and young people, they explain what has happened without euphemisms and answer questions honestly. Allowing children and young people to talk about the person they have lost as much or as little as they wish is important, as is supporting them in attending funerals, retaining memories and marking anniversaries.

'Clinical observations of over 2000 children ... suggest that being given permission to talk about, and remember their dead family member in a way that is meaningful for them is very comforting for most children' (Stokes 2004)

Providing a safe, secure and stable environment for bereaved children and young people is one of the most helpful things that carers – and the local authorities supporting them – can offer.

## Supporting bereaved children and young people

This list incorporates Worden's (1996) outline of children's needs following a parent's death, as well as suggestions from the children, young people, carers and professionals who contributed to the CBN study (2007).

### About the death...

Children and young people should:

- be given information about the death and what happened
- have someone who will listen to their thoughts and worries
- have their feelings acknowledged and respected as valid
- be allowed to express sadness, anger and distress
- be reassured that they are not to blame for the death
- have their questions answered honestly.

### Funerals and memories...

Children and young people should:

- have the chance to say goodbye to the person who has died
- be involved in and contribute to funeral arrangements
- be able to see and experience how other people grieve and to learn how people grieve, and have opportunities to meet others in the same situation
- have opportunities throughout their lives to remember the person who has died.

### My life now...

Children and young people should:

- know who will care for them now
- continue with their routines and everyday lives
- have help with overwhelming feelings that may spill over into challenging behaviour
- keep in contact with other family members.

## Culture and bereavement

Within different cultures, religions and ethnic groups there are many different ways to mourn a death and remember those who have died. It is important that not only is this respected but also that children and young people are given the opportunity to learn how loss and bereavement are dealt with by the culture, religion or ethnic group that they belong to. Carers and professionals may also need information to enable them to support children and young people in this.

## Suicide

The aftermath of suicide is one of the most difficult bereavements for those left behind and children and young people may well find such a death extremely hard to understand. It is likely to be extremely difficult for carers to explain this to a child or young person, and carers need support, guidance and appropriate resources to help them do this. The 'Useful resources' section highlights some practical resources that cover this issue for carers, children and young people.

## Support and training for carers

Loss and bereavement are part of everyone's life, including the carers, residential childcare staff, social workers and others who are involved in supporting looked after children and young people. Sometimes unresolved personal issues of grief can make it difficult for carers and other professionals to support children and young people as well as they might. Carers and others can also not feel confident about dealing with grief and may not be sure how best to support a child or young person: they often fear saying the wrong thing or making things worse for a child or young person.

Foster carers and residential childcare staff who have participated in training on bereavement and loss have reported how useful this was in helping them to understand the impact of these experiences on children and young people. Afterwards they felt more confident and skilled in supporting children and young people and were more aware of their own feelings about, and experiences of, loss. They also felt more informed about sources of help and specialist support (such a training course for carers is described in Case study 1). In addition, carers and residential childcare staff who are working with bereaved children and young people will need support with bereavement issues within their supervision, and possibly specialist support from a bereavement service. Many employers provide bereavement support for staff who have been affected by the death of someone close to them and carers may benefit from this too.

'I supported a child two years ago through a tragic loss where I had grown very close to the deceased through supporting the child. The months afterwards were very traumatic for the child and I supported him to the best of my ability but I did not realise how badly I had been affected ... I realised afterwards that I needed to be more honest in supervision in order to avoid getting low again.'  
Foster carer, CBN study

### Specialist bereavement support

Specialist bereavement support complements the day-to-day support offered by carers and meets particular needs following bereavement, such as addressing trauma or meeting other young people who have been bereaved. Such services may be provided locally by CAMHS or by dedicated childhood bereavement services, some of which are within the statutory sector, and some of which are attached to hospices, supporting those whose parent or sibling has died in the hospice's care. A growing number of community-based organisations work with any bereaved

child, regardless of the cause of death, often offering these services to a catchment area county or borough.

The CBN study reported from dedicated childhood bereavement services working with children and young people who were living in foster care placements and residential children homes. The support they offered included one-to-one and group support for children, young people and families and carers, as well as work with schools, social workers and other professionals. An independent fostering provider commented that group sessions were proving to be supportive, as often children and young people felt isolated by their experience of bereavement and found comfort in meeting other children and young people who had had similar experiences.

The CBN study reported that carers, social workers, looked after children's nurses and residential childcare staff had experienced difficulties in accessing specialist support for bereaved children and young people. In some areas, CAMHS services had long waiting lists and the

high threshold of concern for referral meant that these were not appropriate for generic bereavement support. Even if services were available in the area, sometimes children and young people were not receiving speedy referrals because court proceedings regarding the child or young person were still underway. Carers and looked after children's nurses felt strongly that children and young people's need for help and support should come first and not be delayed because they were subject to care proceedings.

Information about specialist bereavement services for children and young people should be easily available to carers, social workers, residential childcare workers and looked after children's nurses. Many services provide resources and support for families to help them enable the child or young person to deal with their own feelings and anxieties about the loss or bereavement. The 'Useful resources' and 'Websites' sections at the end of this briefing are a starting point for more information about national and local help and support.

## References

Catcher Media (2007) *Losing Touch: a DVD about bereavement and loss made by children and young people in care*. Herefordshire: Catcher Media.

Cousins, W and others (2003) *The Care Careers of Younger Looked after Children: Findings from the Multiple Placements Project*. Belfast: Queen's University Belfast.

Department for Education and Skills (2005) *Healthy Care Programme Handbook*. London: National Children's Bureau.  
[http://www.ncb.org.uk/Page.asp?originx\\_5026ct\\_3447838754892j50q\\_2006815438z](http://www.ncb.org.uk/Page.asp?originx_5026ct_3447838754892j50q_2006815438z) (accessed 23/07/2007)

Devon County Council (2006) *Loss and Bereavement Policy and Guidelines*. (unpublished) Devon: The Atkinson Unit.

Dowdney, L (2000) 'Annotation: childhood bereavement following parental death', *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 7, 819–830.

Franzen, E and Vinnerljung, B (2006) 'Foster children as young adults: many motherless, fatherless or orphaned: a Swedish national cohort study', *Child and Family Social Work*, 11, 254–263.

Green, H and others (2004) *Mental Health of Children and Adolescents in Great Britain*. London: HMSO.

Healthy Care (2006) *Secure Attachment Promotes Health and Well-being*. London: National Children's Bureau.  
[http://www.ncb.org.uk/Page.asp?originx\\_9834gc\\_55239231936145p49n\\_2006811526p](http://www.ncb.org.uk/Page.asp?originx_9834gc_55239231936145p49n_2006811526p) (accessed 23 July 2007)

H M Government (2007) *Care Matters: Time for Change*. Norwich: The Stationery Office.

Howarth, G and Leaman, O (eds) (2001) *Encyclopedia of Death and Dying*. London: Routledge. In Rowling, L (2003) *Grief in School Communities: Effective Support Strategies*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Penny, A (2007) *Grief Matters for Children. Support for children in public care experiencing bereavement and loss*. London: National Children's Bureau.

Ribbens McCarthy, J and Jessop, J (2005) *Young People, Bereavement and Loss. Disruptive transitions?* London: National Children's Bureau.

Schofield, G and Beek, M (2006) *Attachment Handbook for Foster Care and Adoption*. London: British Association for Adoption and Fostering.

Stokes, J A (2004) *Then, Now and Always: Supporting children as they journey through grief: a guide for practitioners*. Cheltenham: Winston's Wish.

Worden, J William (1996) *Children and Grief: When a parent dies*. New York: Guildford Press.

Yule, W (2005) 'Working with traumatically bereaved children' in Monroe, B and Kraus, F (eds) *Brief Interventions with Bereaved Children*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

# case studies

## 1. Bereavement and Loss Training for Foster Carers – Jigsaw4u

Jigsaw4u is a charity that aims to empower children and young people, as well as their families, to develop strategies for coping with loss and trauma. Jigsaw4u undertook a series of consultations about loss and bereavement with looked after children and young people and foster carers for the CBN study. They used their findings to develop and pilot a training day for foster carers in a London borough.

The day drew on carers' own experiences as well as those of the children and young people they had supported. The day included:

- an exploration of the impact that change and loss have on feelings
- discussion of research on the longer term impact of bereavement on children and young people's lives
- discussion of other losses that children and young people may experience
- a video on the impact of the death of a parent on the life of children and young people ('You'll always remember them, even when you're old' – see 'Useful resources' at the end of this briefing)
- discussion of case studies that explored how loss and trauma can affect children and young people's feelings and behaviour
- discussion and sharing of practical ways to offer support following bereavement and loss.

Carers said the day helped them to think about the relationship between the behaviour they noticed among the children and young people in their care, and the child or young persons' past history. They also found the practical activity suggestions helpful, for example:

- making memory boxes with a child or young person
- salt jars with different coloured salts to represent particular memories
- releasing balloons on anniversaries or important dates.

Carers said that these practical strategies ('not just theory'), which they could take home and use, would enable them to help children and young people to talk

about their experiences in their own time. They also felt that these would give them the opportunity and time to listen to and be with the child or young person. They found the suggestions about where to go for further help particularly useful as they had previously struggled to find this. Of the nine carers attending the day, six were currently caring for a bereaved child or had recent experience of this.

Carers said they felt more confident in supporting bereaved children and young people following the course, and had become more aware of their own needs in doing so. They had learned that grief can last for years and that to help children and young people, they needed to ask what would help, to listen and to provide opportunities to talk. They also recognised that the skills they had learned in relation to grief were transferable to other forms of loss. Suggestions for further development included providing a session for social workers, including managers, on bereavement and the support foster carers need on this subject, or to train carers and social workers together to help the development of a 'team around the child' approach.

Find out more about Jigsaw4u at:  
[www.jigsaw4u.org.uk](http://www.jigsaw4u.org.uk)

## 2. The Atkinson Secure Unit, Devon

Recognition by staff at the Atkinson Secure Unit that loss and bereavement are common experiences for many young people in secure accommodation led to the development of:

- a policy and guidelines for responding to loss and bereavement
- the appointment of a part-time bereavement worker
- training for all the staff at the unit.

The bereavement worker carried out a brief study of the losses experienced by young people in the unit which, at the time of the study, included 15 young people aged 12 to 16 years. All of the young people had experienced a loss or bereavement in the last five years, 93 per cent of them had been separated from their parents before coming to the unit,

and none of them had ever done any work on loss or bereavement. The losses they had experienced included:

- a mother dying
- a grandparent dying (in four cases, this was their main carer)
- being placed into care
- a nephew dying
- a brother murdered
- parents divorced
- not seeing any of their family
- being placed in secure accommodation.

The unit's policy and guidelines help to identify when support may be necessary for a young person and give some guidance on how to provide it, such as finding a young person a private place to cry. The guidelines briefly cover aspects of grief, signposts to key resources – some of which are available at the unit for staff to borrow – and offer a 'do and don't tips list for staff'. Their policy also includes a case study showing how a young person was supported around the death of a foster carer, and a section on recognising parental separation, divorce and family break-up as significant losses for children and young people.

The bereavement worker, trained in adolescent bereavement, is available to work with any young person who has experienced bereavement or loss. Often the young person will be referred by their key worker. The aim is to work with the young person when they feel ready to do so and is based around six sessions:

- getting to know me
- telling my story
- feelings and self-esteem
- memories
- coping strategies
- the future and goodbyes.

Every session is tailored around the individual young person's needs. The sessions are optional and there is no pressure on the young person to attend as it is important for them to have control over their emotions and to feel safe to talk at a time that's right for them. The bereavement worker has found that memories can be very mixed for young people as they may have very few happy memories. The sessions also explore how that young person can

develop strategies to help them manage their feelings and emotions now and in the future when they have left the unit. She comments:

'It can be the first time a young person has ever had to deal with their feelings without alcohol or drugs or peers, it may be the first time they have ever been in a safe place. It can be very hard for some young people to face their feelings – one young person with a very difficult background could only focus on the loss of his pet, so that is where we started.'

The unit tries to ensure that young people affected by bereavement can attend the funeral of the person who has died. This is not always possible as the final decision is made by social workers or youth justice workers. The unit will work with the young person to prepare for the funeral and hold religious services at the unit. The bereavement worker has noted how important anniversaries of deaths are for young people and helps them to mark the occasion. The unit also has access to a play therapist and a drama therapist, and the bereavement worker works closely with the drugs project staff.

Staff at the unit have all undertaken training to help them recognise the importance of bereavement and loss and identify behaviour that may be sparked by issues of loss. There are plans for some staff members to undertake further training, for example, the diploma in young people and adolescent bereavement.

For more information contact the bereavement worker, Tina Parker.  
Email: [tina.parker@devon.gov.uk](mailto:tina.parker@devon.gov.uk)

## Useful resources

*A Death in the Lives of...* (2002) In this video, made with the help of the St Christopher's Candle Project, a group of young people aged 13–16 from a range of backgrounds talk about the kind of support they needed to help them cope with bereavement. Available from: [www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)

*Attachment for Foster Care and Adoption: a training programme* (2006) A video and DVD to support the training. Gillian Schofield and Mary Beek; London: British Association of Adoption and Fostering.

*Attachment, Trauma and Resilience. Therapeutic caring for children* (2002) Kate Cairns; London: British Association of Adoption and Fostering.

*Bereavement – Helping Parents and Children Cope when Someone Close to Them Dies* Understanding Childhood Leaflet; Kent: Understanding Childhood Ltd. Available to download from: [www.understandingchildhood.net/documents/13UCBereavement01.pdf](http://www.understandingchildhood.net/documents/13UCBereavement01.pdf)

*Beyond the Rough Rock. Supporting a child who has been bereaved through suicide* (2001) Practical advice for parents and families for the days and weeks immediately following suicide. Available from: [www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)

*Grief in the Family* (2002) Narrated by Michael Rosen, this 14-minute animated video/DVD looks at the ways in which children and young people respond to grief, and what the adults around them can do to help. Available from: [www.leedsanimation.org.uk](http://www.leedsanimation.org.uk)

*Guidelines for Best Practice. Supporting parents of bereaved children and young people* (2006) London: Childhood Bereavement Network. Available to

download from: [http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/documents/Guidelinesforsupportingparents\\_000.pdf](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/documents/Guidelinesforsupportingparents_000.pdf)

Healthy Care Programme Briefings on: *Mental health* (2005), *Sexual health* (2005), *Play and creativity* (2005), *Healthy eating and physical activity* (2005), *Substance misuse* (2005), *Arts in partnerships to promote health and well-being* (2006), *Supporting young parents who are looked after* (2006), *Secure attachments promote health and well-being* (2006), *Supporting and training foster carers to promote health and well-being* (2007) London: National Children's Bureau. Available to download from: [www.ncb.org.uk/healthycare](http://www.ncb.org.uk/healthycare)

*I Can... You Can... Postcards* (2002) A set of postcards for children and young people who have lost someone special, to share with other important people in their lives. Children and young people can use them to tell parents, carers, friends or teachers how they can help, and to remind themselves of coping strategies. Available from [www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)

*It will be OK* (2004) A video developed, directed and filmed by nine bereaved young people aged 13 to 18 to help their peers to identify the emotions and behaviour they may experience after a bereavement. Available from [www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)

*Improving the Emotional Health and Well-being of Young People in Secure Care. Training for staff in local authority secure children's homes* (2005) J Bird and L Gerlach; London: National Children's Bureau.

*Losing Touch* (2007) A powerful film about bereavement and loss made by Catcher Media with young people who

are looked after. Includes a poem, interviews and drama. A creative tool to promote discussion in training sessions for foster carers, residential and social workers. Available soon from [www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)

*Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine* (2000) An activity book for younger children to complete with an adult. Can also be kept as a memory book. Available from: [www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)

*Not too Young to Grieve Training Pack* (2005) A training resource on grief and the under-fives for practitioners working with children and families. Available free to download from: [www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)

*Not too Young to Grieve* (2005) DVD. Available on loan from public libraries or for purchase from: [www.leedsanimation.org.uk](http://www.leedsanimation.org.uk)

*Talking with Children and Young People About Death and Dying: a resource* (second edition 2006) Mary Turner; London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

*Then, Now and Always. Supporting Children as they Journey through Grief: a Guide for Practitioners* (2004) J A Stokes; Cheltenham: Winston's Wish.

*Teenage Grief* (2007) DVD. Available from [www.leedsanimation.org.uk](http://www.leedsanimation.org.uk)

*You'll Always Remember Them, Even When You're Old* (2003) video. Children aged 6–12 who have lost a parent discuss the impact of bereavement on their lives and the support they received from family, friends, hospitals, bereavement service providers and schools. Jigsaw4u and Childhood Bereavement Network. Available from [www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)

## Useful websites

### Asylum-seeking and refugee children and young people good practice website

[www.ncb.org.uk/arc](http://www.ncb.org.uk/arc)

Information and resources on asylum-seeking and refugee children and young people, including health issues.

### British Association of Adoption and Fostering

[www.baaf.org.uk](http://www.baaf.org.uk)

Publishes a number of books and other guides related to attachment needs and difficulties.

### Childhood Bereavement Network

[www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)

A network of organisations and individuals working in the field of childhood bereavement. Links to local bereavement services for children and young people as well as resources for children and young people, parents, carers and professionals.

### Child Bereavement Trust

[www.childbereavement.org.uk](http://www.childbereavement.org.uk)

Training and resources for families and professionals on child bereavement.

### Cruse Bereavement Care

[www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk](http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk)

Promotes the well-being of bereaved people. Provides counselling and support, information, advice, education and training services, plus a telephone helpline: 0844 477 9400. Young people's website at [www.rd4u.org.uk](http://www.rd4u.org.uk) has message boards and activities. Young people's helpline on 0808 808 1677.

### Fostering Network

[www.fostering.net](http://www.fostering.net)  
Provides practical support, training and resources for foster carers, social workers and other professionals.

### Healthy Care Programme

[www.ncb.org.uk/healthycare](http://www.ncb.org.uk/healthycare)

Information and resources to promote healthy care for looked after children and young people.

### Papyrus

[www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)

A charity committed to suicide prevention and focusing on the emotional well-being of children, teenagers and young adults. Resources for parents and carers, professionals and young people. Also a telephone helpline: HOPElineUK 0870 170 4000.

### Samaritans

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

Confidential non-judgemental support, 24 hours a day, for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those that could lead to suicide. Also respond to letters and emails. Telephone helpline: 08457 90 90 90.

### Self Harm

[www.selfharm.org.uk](http://www.selfharm.org.uk)

Information for young people who self-harm, their friends and families, and professionals working with them. This site contains sensitive information.

### Winston's Wish

[www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)

A charity for bereaved children and young people who have experienced a family death. Practical support and guidance for families, professionals and anyone concerned about a grieving child. Books and activities for children and resources for parents and carers, including information in English, Bengali and Arabic. Also a website for young people with interactive resources and suggestions for activities. Telephone helpline: 0845 20 30 40 5.

## The National Healthy Care Standard

Contributes to the achievement of the five outcomes outlined in *Every Child Matters* (HM Treasury 2003):

- being healthy
- staying safe
- enjoying and achieving
- making a positive contribution
- economic well-being.

*Care Matters: Time for Change* (HM Government 2007)

This White Paper sets out the steps government and local partners will take to improve the outcomes for children and young people in care including:

- every local authority setting out its pledge to children and young people in care, covering the services and support children and young people should receive
- consideration of a new indicator on emotional and behavioural difficulties of children and young people in care
- more focus on supporting relatives who

could care for children and young people

- setting standards for foster care and improving training and specialist support for foster carers in order to develop their skills
- issuing statutory guidance to local authorities and healthcare bodies on the health of children and young people in care
- improving school experiences and attainment of children and young people in care
- ensuring children and young people can access positive and enjoyable activities outside of school and that this is included in care planning
- continuing support for care leavers for as long as they need it and introducing a more gradual and prepared move from leaving care
- piloting children and young people remaining with foster carers until they are 21.

## The Childhood Bereavement Network

(CBN) is a national, multi-professional network of organisations and individuals working in the field of childhood bereavement. CBN promotes the interests of bereaved children, young people and their families and encourages the development of quality support for them.

CBN's Grief Matters for Children campaign, funded by the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund, calls for appropriate information and support to be available to all bereaved children, young people and their families, wherever they live and however they have been bereaved.

For more information, visit [www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)

Published by the National Children's Bureau

8 Wakley Street, London EC1V 7QE

Telephone: +44 (0)20 7843 6000

Fax: +44 (0)20 7278 9512

Website: [www.ncb.org.uk](http://www.ncb.org.uk)

Registered Charity No: 258825

Email: [enquiries@ncb.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ncb.org.uk)

© National Children's Bureau 2007



Princess of Wales Memorial Fund  
THE WORK CONTINUES



Childhood  
Bereavement  
Network



national  
children's  
bureau