



The difference you have made CHSA July 2024

Because no child should face grief alone

Grief Encounter

We would like to give our most sincere thanks to CHSA for your wonderful donation of £10,000 in July 2024. This will contribute towards 100 one-to-one bereavement counselling for children, young people and families across the UK. This report outlines the activities your continued support will help us to achieve over the coming 12 months and offer some highlights from the past 12 months.

Grief Encounter provides professional support to bereaved children, young people and their families in the UK following the death of someone close. We create a safe space to help children and young people understand their personal experience of grief and explore difficult conversations openly and honestly.



Why your donation matters

We know that children who have experienced a major bereavement are a **vulnerable and deprived** group. They are more likely to develop serious mental health problems, be excluded from school, become involved in criminal activity, and experience financial difficulties. They have trouble trusting and live in a sense of fear. The emotions experienced by a grieving child can have life-altering and long-lasting negative impacts on a child's development. We mitigate these outcomes with our specialist and professional support:

- Our therapy support is run by **fully qualified and accredited counsellors**, setting us apart from other bereavement charities
- Our work has an excellent success record, with over **90%** of our children and families seeing improvements
- We work amongst the **10% most deprived neighbourhoods** in the country
- Every family has a **bespoke plan**, designed and supported by trained bereavement counsellors.



Our impact highlights in the last financial year

- We delivered **4,123** specialist one-to-one therapeutic sessions, both online and face-to-face
- Over **9,400** contacts (calls, web chats and emails) were made to grieftalk
- We made **450** family liaison calls
- We received **873** referrals to our services
- **36** children and parents attended our Autumn residential which you generously contributed to in 2023
- **99** children and young people attended our workshops
- **105** children and young people attended our fun days and events

Key highlights from Grief Encounter

We held two Comedy Nights in November 2023 which had a fantastic turnout and raised an amazing £90,000.

We are proud to share that one of our young beneficiaries won the BBC Make a Difference Award for Fundraiser of the Year for raising a phenomenal £60,000 by running 5k.

Our animation film "Why it matters" was nominated for a Finalist for a Smiley Award in February 2024.

Our therapeutic services - an overview

Thanks to your wonderful donation, we will be able to continue supporting bereaved children and young people across the UK. As mentioned above, we provided 4,123 specialist one-to-one therapeutic sessions, both online and face-to-face, to children, young adults and adults. Thanks to CHSA we can reach even more children and young people facing their darkest days of grief.

One-to-one bereavement counselling – what makes us unique?

- A team of therapists provided children and young people with a range of therapies including art, play, drama and movement, music, and talking therapy combined with creative interventions. Over the last year, we have increased our team of therapists to enable us to significantly reduce the waiting time for children looking to access bereavement counselling.
- We have noticed an increase in more complex bereavement cases. For example, we are providing more complex bereavement support to children and families who have suffered the death of a loved one in the wake of the cost-of-living crisis.
- We are committed to ensuring that our counsellors receive ongoing training so they can excel in their role. Recent training has included: Managing Anger and Difficult Behaviour for parents and Understanding Autism, delivered by an Autism specialist service.
- We are also offering placements from Universities to ensure that specialist capacity grows and embeds into local universal settings. Current Universities we are offering placements with include Hertfordshire University, The Institute for Arts and Therapy in Education and Birkbeck University.

Bereavement Support Team

Research and our experience shows that only a small percentage of children and young people need one-to-one counselling. With the right help and support, the majority of children and young people benefit most from being supported by their family and community. We have increased capacity in our Bereavement Support Team to offer additional support to families referred to us. This includes 4-6 family support sessions, which focus on the family's strengths and help develop resilience. We want to equip parents/carers with the confidence to talk openly about death and dying with their children. We will offer tailored support to the family e.g. managing anger and sleep therapy.

In addition, we will offer groups and two residential weekends. Support will be provided online, by phone and face-to-face from our Therapy Hubs in London. We aim to support children and young people to develop increased resilience, improved mental health and reduced feelings of isolation.

Our impact

We consistently see children and young people we support report improved scores in their wellbeing and ability to manage grief. This includes improved scores in how they are doing in school, what they understand about the bereavement and a reduction in how much they are worrying. Building resilience to navigate life-long grief and reducing isolation reduces the risk of negative life outcomes for children and young people.

Feedback



As a parent, the charity has helped me to learn how to cope with my own grief alongside the children's. They have given me tools and techniques I can use to encourage them to open up to me, start conversations and help me understand.



Grief Encounter helped me to understand the new me and the new world I am now in.



I like to talk about different memories, and I can ask daddy any questions I have. Grief Encounter has changed things for me. I feel much happier and positive about the future.

How we helped Jamie*

Jamie*, 16, suffered the death of his sister in 2020.

"I didn't feel like I could talk to anyone in my immediate family about how I was feeling, so I hid it. I saw an advert for grieftalk on Instagram and called them after school one day. I spoke to a man who let me say whatever I needed to, in a safe space. Since I spoke to the helpline, they've invited me to online teen sessions, where I can meet other kids who know how I feel. It's helped me feel less alone, less isolated and given me a place I feel like I can be just me and say what I want to without judgement."

*Name changed

Looking ahead

Our ambitions for the year ahead are:

- **Working towards** compassionate and care-based communities, including community hubs to reach more bereaved children, young people and their families.
- **Making sure all children get help including** marginalised groups who are experiencing disenfranchised grief, including LGBTQ+, families in poverty, those with disabilities, looked after children and other groups who are not as fortunate to access help when they need it most.
- **Ensure** children receive the right help, at the right time, from the right people giving them the very best chances of living fulfilled lives as they grow into their formative years.
- **A campaign** to spotlight the power of storytelling from lived experience and highlight the importance of talking about death and dying.

On behalf of the bereaved families we support, we would like to thank CHSA for your generosity in making our work possible.