

teen bereavement and how we can help

Teenagers are often overlooked when grieving. Something I really should have realised from my own experience of navigating my teenage years after the loss of both my brother and grandfather within a year of each other. However, it isn't something I'd seriously reflected on until recently. Maybe due to burying my own feelings and pretending for so long that everything was ok. Perhaps somewhere in me I believed everything was ok. That being a teenager meant you were invincible, and I'd dealt with it well. I was being truly 'teenage' about the whole thing. By behaving in such a stereotypical, teenage way instead of dealing with things back then, I have lived with mental health struggles throughout my adult life.

I've had a number of 'breakdowns' which have led me to see a therapist. The last one was almost three years ago, and we talked a lot about my grief and the lack of support that I received at the time; about how I kept all my feelings inside to try to appear strong to those around me and about how I never cried.

So, some twenty-eight years after he died, I finally grieved for my brother. I feel so much better and stronger for having done so. I only wish I had done it years ago.

From researching and writing *Love Will Never Die* (a book to help younger children through bereavement published in 2017), I knew many stats around bereavement. For example:

- A parent dies every 22 minutes in the UK
- 1 in 29 children experience the death of a parent or sibling
- 41% of young offenders were bereaved as a child

Despite learning these, I had always associated them with younger children as they were my target audience. I had almost blocked the idea that any of this related to teenagers – even though it so obviously did. Looking back, maybe that was all part of my youth and how I had dealt with it. I was still burying things.

Until recently, I had never considered writing for teens – in fact, the idea scared me!

However, hearing there were few resources out there for teenagers; knowing that these kids needed help; knowing how not dealing with grief as a teen had affected me, I started to do further research. I read so much and wrote so many notes, there came a point that I just had to go for it...

On Wednesday 9th June, *A Mind Full of Grief* was published. A bereavement guide for teenagers and young adults.

At time of writing, the book has yet to be published. During the last phases of editing, the book was sent to several people for comment and edits. As part of the process, the book went to a few focus groups via bereavement charities that I had worked with previously. This was a wonderful exercise as the feedback that came was completely anonymous and therefore honest. Here are a couple of examples:

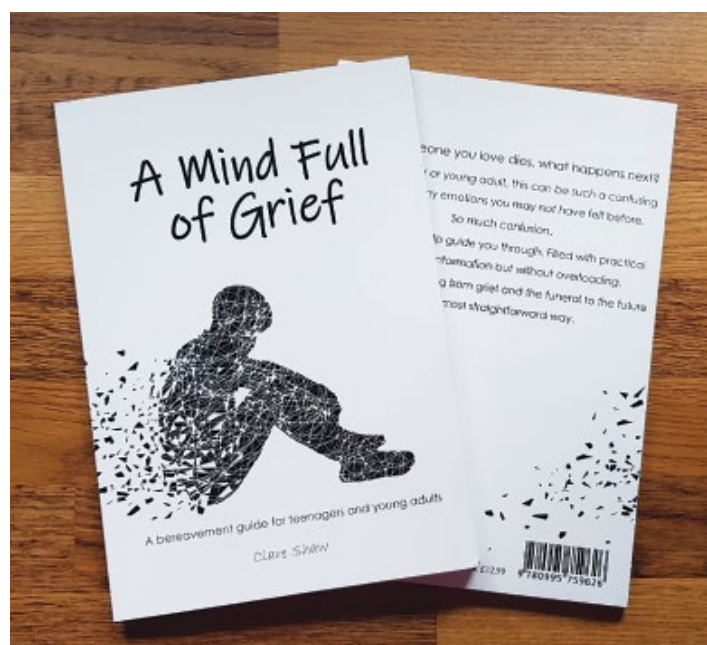
"Having two teenagers, finding something that talks to them at their level (not a child, not an adult) is very refreshing."

"I liked the general format of the book because it was interactive as well as informative."

"I really like it; it is a good summary of all the things to be ready for and ways of coping. I think it is good that it tells teens about grief without sugar coating it too much."

The Blurp:

When someone you love dies, what happens next? As a teenager or young adult, this can be such a confusing time. So many emotions you may not have felt before.



So much confusion.

This book will help you through. Filled with practical and honest information but without overloading.

Covering everything from grief and the funeral to the future in the most straightforward way.

For some, one of the hardest things when someone has died is telling other people. Inside the back cover is a flap containing a few leaflets to help the reader explain to teachers, colleagues and friends what has happened. It reads:

"Use these leaflets, if you need to, to let people know what has happened and guide those around you in how best to support you.

Fill in as much detail as you're comfortable with.

Your feelings may alter over time, you can always let people know if anything changes.

You may choose to use them all. You may choose to use none."

The book is available at www.cskidsbooks.com/shop with 40% off rrp as an introductory offer if you use the code DDA25 at checkout.

If you wish to buy multiple copies, or discuss a trade account, please email debbie@cskidsbooks.com.

Claire Shaw

MADE WITH LOVE AND CRAFTSMANSHIP

A sublime design, high-quality finishing and craftsmanship come together in our Odyssee urns, part of the exclusive FP-Originals collection. A special line of products that have been sketched, designed and produced by Funeral Products themselves. Memorial items that find their inspiration in the artistic aspects of Dutch Design.

The Teardrop has a robust yet gentle design, giving it a luxurious look. Its abstract shape completes the 'drop' design, symbolising a tear which intimately is linked with a final goodbye. A high-quality and above all fair product. Made with love, to pass on with love to those to those who are no longer here anymore.

