

**If you or someone you know is struggling with loss, grief and bereavement, we can help.**

Please get in touch with TCT to see how we can help you:

Email [tct@cancercares.org.uk](mailto:tct@cancercares.org.uk) or call 01524 381 820

### **Additional support groups**

#### **Compassionate Friends**

Is a national organisation which has local groups in Lancaster (at The Lodge pub) as well as in Carlisle. You can contact them on their helpline 0345 123 2304 or via email on [helpline@tcf.co.uk](mailto:helpline@tcf.co.uk).

#### **St John's Hospice, Lancaster**

Provides bereavement support when someone dies who is known to the hospice. You can call them on 01524 382 538.

#### **St Mary's Hospice, Ulverston**

Provides bereavement support to over 18s, and no previous contact with the hospice is needed. You can contact them on 01229 580305.

#### **Child Bereavement UK**

A national charity providing professional support for children and teenagers faced with Bereavement. Contact them on 0800 02 888 40 or email [support@childbereavementuk.org](mailto:support@childbereavementuk.org). They have an app: <https://childbereavementuk.org/our-app>.

#### **Winston's Wish**

A childhood bereavement charity providing support for children facing bereavement. You can contact them on their on 08088 020 021, or email them at [ask@winstonswish.org](mailto:ask@winstonswish.org).

#### **Help2makesense**

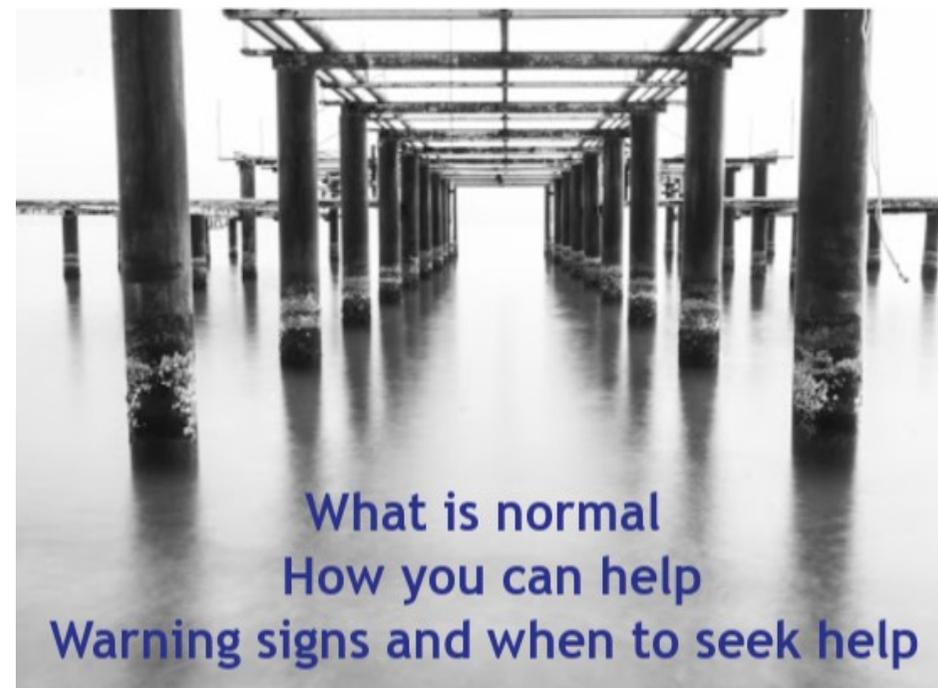
There is lots of support, advice and resources on their website <http://help2makesense.org/>.

#### **Apart of Me**

Apart of Me is a ground-breaking mobile game which helps young people cope with life-limiting illness, death and loss. Find it on the App Store and Play Store.



## **Grief, Loss & Bereavement in teenagers**



## **A teenager's grief**

The transition from childhood to adulthood can be a challenging process at the best of times; if someone important dies during these years it is made even more so. It may be difficult to work out what behaviour is due to being a teenager and what is due to grieving - the emotional and behavioural changes can be very similar.

## **How can I help as a care giver?**

Be honest about the nature of the death. It might be necessary to give it in small chunks to avoid overload but be sure that any information is true so that it does not need to be changed later. Trust is really important to teenagers, so you should show them that you trust them.

Encourage them to be involved in the funeral or goodbye ritual. They help people to accept the reality of the death and to share the sorrow. Ask for their thoughts about the funeral, or memorial. Young people have strong and positive memories of a funeral if they had some part to play. Be available to listen but let the teenager take the lead on when and where they talk. They may prefer to talk to their friends than to you.

Recognise the importance of memories. It can be good to talk whilst doing an activity like looking at a photo album. Get into the habit of talking about the person in everyday conversation 'your mum loved this' 'do you remember when' to indicate that you are comfortable talking about the person.

## **When should I seek help for my teenager?**

Particularly in the early days after a death, counselling is not usually what children of any age want or need unless the death has been in very traumatic circumstances. The bereaved teenagers that we work with at CancerCare tell us what they need initially is to be with adults who they already know and trust, rather than a stranger with whom they have to spend time building up a relationship. However, in time, needs will change and some teenagers find speaking to a counsellor helpful, but others will not.

## **What are the warning signs for a teenager possibly needing additional support?**

Signs can include:

- Withdrawn from friends and family
- Major change in behaviour
- Self-harming
- Abuse of alcohol or drugs
- Talking about suicide
- Feeling guilty about the death
- Decline in school performance
- Constantly thinking about the death

If you think your teenager may benefit from talking to one of our counsellors, please contact us using the details overleaf.