

Dealing with Bereavement and Loss

How does grief affect a child?

Following a death, children may experience the following.

Anxiety

Difficulty leaving a parent or becoming overly anxious about everyday tasks.

Sadness

Becoming quiet and withdrawn.

Avoidance

May avoid things that remind them about death, including topics or conversations.

Impaired ability to concentrate or focus

This may be because of their grief and/or specific anxieties.

Extreme tiredness

Anger or acting out difficult behaviour

Which may mask sadness and low mood.

Sleep difficulties

Fears, nightmares or dreams, especially if there has been confusion about what happened to the person who died.

Guilt

Especially if they connect something they said or did with the death; for example, an argument.

Physical complaints

Distress is often expressed physically, but sometimes complaints may mirror those of the deceased.