



This booklet will help you to understand more about death and the feelings we all have when someone we care about, like a parent, a brother or sister, a grandparent or a friend, has died. It would be best to read this with an adult that you feel comfortable with and can talk to. Some of the feelings that you may experience are:

Understanding my feelings

- If someone dies very suddenly, it is a huge shock. You might feel numb and find it hard to believe what has happened.
- You may even find it hard to eat, sleep, talk, play or do your school work. Some people get pains or feel sick or have bad dreams.
- You can miss not having the person about so much. You might miss doing the everyday things you used to do together like reading a story at bedtime or having breakfast.
- Children worry about who will look after them. Sometimes boys and girls worry that they or someone else may become ill or die too.
- It is normal to feel angry with the person who has died for no longer being with you.
- People sometimes feel that they were to blame for the person's death. You may feel cross with

yourself about times you were angry with that person or argued when he or she was alive. But people argue even when they love each other.

Physical aches and pains can present themselves after someone you love dies, and feeling unwell, these are all symptoms of grief and are very real.

All these feelings are normal, and sometimes we feel lots of different feelings at the same time which can be overwhelming. With all these worries, it might be hard to go to sleep or even go to school or out to play with friends. If you feel like this, talk to an adult about your worries.

You may feel all of these feelings or just confused. All these feelings are part of what is called grieving. Some days the feelings may be big and strong, like huge waves on a stormy sea. Other days they may feel more like calm, gentle ripples.



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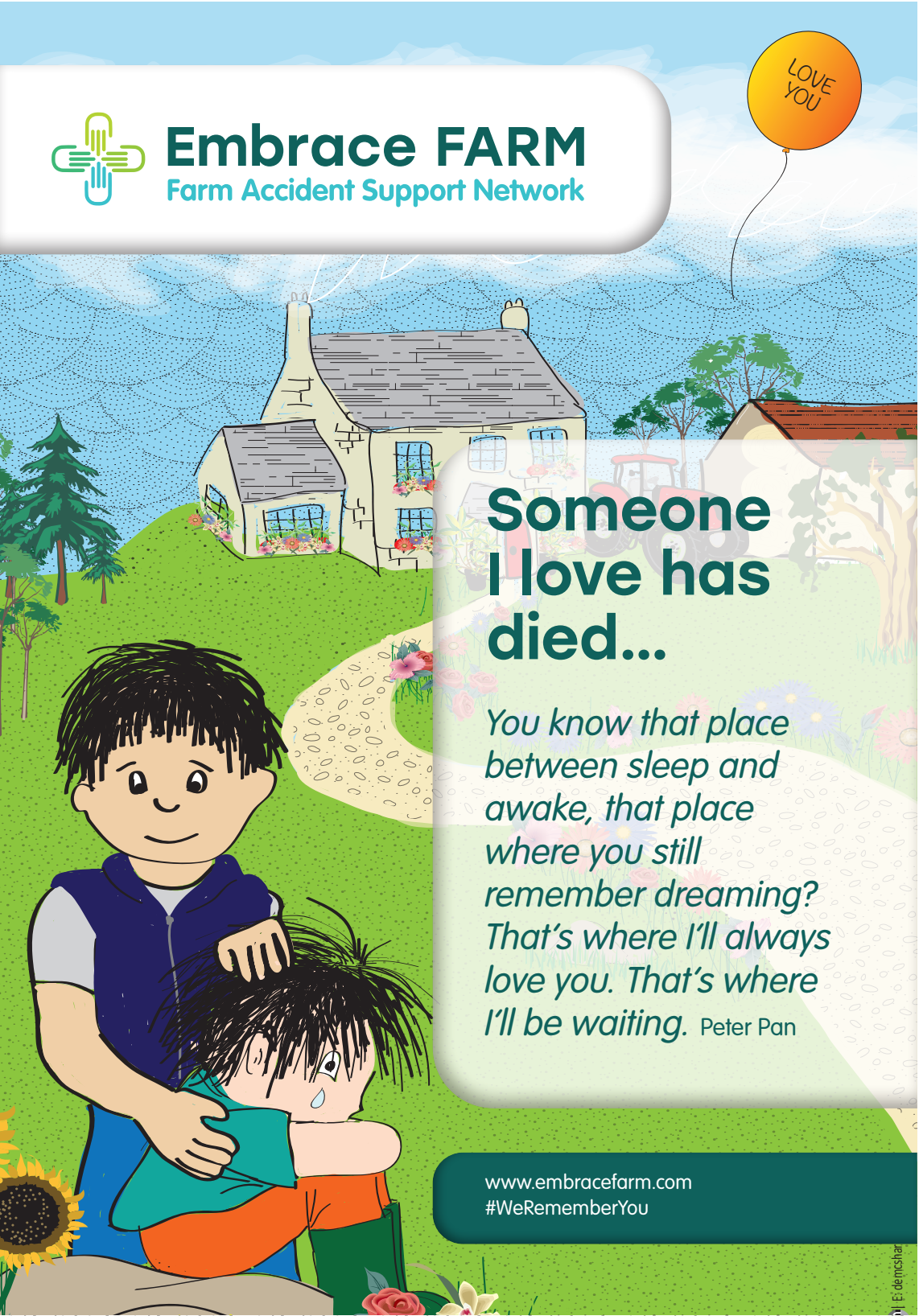
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Someone I love has died...

You know that place between sleep and awake, that place where you still remember dreaming? That's where I'll always love you. That's where I'll be waiting. Peter Pan

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These feelings are all normal and can sometimes get overwhelming and its good to talk about how you feel to someone

Questions I may have:

- What happened?
- Where did they go?
- Will they come back?
- Why did they have to go?
- What happens at a funeral?

What happens at a funeral?

I want to know what's happening, I don't understand

I feel better when I talk about how I'm feeling

Parents when answering these questions or any questions that your child may have after the loss of a loved one, be open and honest and use language that your child can understand, and its ok to say you don't know the answer, and that we can figure things out as a family.

It can be helpful to be honest, to not use euphemisms like "gone to sleep" or "gone to a better place" this can be confusing to young children, use honest and correct words like "has died". Explaining what death means, again it is best to use honest words "heart stopped beating", "doctors and nurses did their very best", sometimes they can help and sometimes they can't no matter how hard they try. Just answer the questions that are being asked, don't try to over explain. Let the child come back to you with more questions as they come to them. Know that it is normal for children to come and go from their grief as their brain develops.

Grieving can take a long time or a short time

It takes time but you will feel better one day. Everyone is different. When people keep their feelings hidden inside and try to pretend that nothing has happened, it can take longer for them to feel better.

Feelings can be let out in lots of different ways – through exercise, sports, play, music, art, writing and talking. Death in a family brings a lot of changes, like changes in who takes you to school, where you live or who cooks the dinner and helps you with homework. It can take time to get used to these changes. It is okay to still play with your friends when someone special has died. You can still remember that special person even if you are enjoying yourself and having fun.

What may help me to feel better?

Someone to talk to

To know my loss is important

Honest Information to help me understand

Taking part in goodbye rituals and having a part to play

Time and space to remember the person

Getting to know and recognise your feelings is very important. Don't be afraid to show your feelings – we all have them!

- You don't have to hide them. Letting others know how you are feeling and letting them support you can help. You could draw or write about how you feel.
- Talking to people about your worries can help, especially as other people might have some good ideas.
- Just being listened to might help you to feel a little better.
- Some people worry that they will forget the person who died. Looking at photographs and talking to other people who know and love the person who died may also help.
- Talking about the person from time to time and of the good times you shared will help to keep the memories safe. It is also important to talk about the times that were not so good.
- You may also find that it helps to talk in your head to the person who has died. Even though the person has died, he or she is still special to you.

Who I can turn too when I need to talk

Your parents

Even though mum or dad might be upset themselves they always want you to talk to them when you are upset or have any questions, so don't be worrying about upsetting your parents they are there for you always

Your friends

Friends want to help support you and are good listeners

Your teachers

Teachers are good at listening and can help you figure things out and can help you understand your feelings

Getting over a death doesn't mean forgetting. It just means that you start to feel less upset. Lots of people have said that even though they will always be a little sad, that after some time they have felt happy again and able to get on with their lives.

Activities you could try - Keeping Memories

Making a Memory box

A memory box is a box that holds special things belonging to the person who has died. It might include the following -

- Photos
 - Clothes/scarf/gloves/hat
 - Their watch, sports jersey
 - Any items that they liked
 - Decorate your memory box with wrapping paper and photos of your loved one and the happy memories you shared together
 - Write letters to them and keep them in your memory box
- When you want to remember you can go to your special memory box and look through all the wonderful memories



Planting a memory tree

- Find a place to plant the tree, e.g. Bottom of your garden
- Buy a small tree to plant
- Hang a photo of your loved one on the tree
- Hang little ribbons, decorations
- Watch the tree grow day by day
- Their love is always growing and never going away



Making a Memory Jar

- Find a little jam jar / bottle with a lid
- Chalk – different colours (each colour will represent a happy memory with your loved one) i.e. yellow = going to the park, blue = playing in the yard
- Salt
- Paper
- Pour the salt on a piece of paper
- Rub the chalk onto the salt until the salt turns a different colour
- Pour the colour chalk into the jam jar
- Do this with each colour chalk you are going to use
- Fill the jar to the very top, place lid on the jar
- Write on the jar the different colours and the memory it represents



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