

Coping with the Death of a Parent (for children and young people)

"Every day I think about my mum and I miss her so much and wish she were here. As I've got older I have learned that it is ok to talk about my feelings and remember the happy times that we had. I have begun to understand that her alcohol problem was like an illness. She wouldn't want me to be sad and she did love me." Nicky

"Grieving for her was as much about understanding her alcoholism as it was about coming to terms with losing her." James

Often our mums and dads die before we do. For most people this happens when they are grown-up, but sadly it sometimes happens when you are a child. If you are young or old, it can be an upsetting and a sad time when you miss them, and wish they were still here.

If your mum or dad suffered from alcohol problems, you might feel confused as well, with lots of unanswered questions. Sometimes people feel it would be better if their parent died to end their suffering, but then feel guilty for having these thoughts.

Some people feel angry, sad, bad and scared about what has happened. Some people might feel relieved and lonely. Whatever you feel, it is OK to talk. Try not to be scared to talk. You can tell someone how you are feeling.

After someone dies, families can end up arguing. Some people get angry, and some get upset. Remember that you are not to blame for what has happened. It is not your fault. You are not alone and Nacoa is here to help. Whether a parent dies because of their drinking, other health problems, suicide, or something else, we are here to listen.

Talking can help you to start to feel better, and understand things a little more. If you have some questions about what has happened, don't be afraid to ask them.

Sharing memories of your mum or dad is another way to feel a bit better. Try to think of people you like talking to, or people who are good listeners. Maybe you have a teacher at school, a friend, a friend's mum or dad, an aunt, uncle or someone else you could talk to.

Remember you can always call Nacoa on 0800 358 3456 or email us on helpline@nacoa.org.uk. You can tell us as much or as little as you want.



Listed below are other organisations offering help for children and young people coping with the death of a parent. Their websites give further information and suggest books that may be helpful.

For example, Cruse has produced this leaflet about death, bereavement and grief for young people:

<http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk/PDFs/YouthBooklet.pdf>

Bereavement support

RD4U (part of Cruse Bereavement Care for young people) www.rd4u.org.uk

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide www.uk-sobs.org.uk

Winston's Wish www.winstonswish.org.uk

