

Just Ask Me:

How a charity used lived experience to embed change into bereavement support in the education sector.

Background

In the UK, a child or young person is bereaved of someone close to them approximately every **20–22 minutes**, with **1 in 29** school age children having experienced the death of a parent or sibling.



Childhood bereavement carries increased risks to mental health, learning, and social and educational outcomes, yet support across education settings remains inconsistent with many professionals reporting limited training, **low confidence**, and a lack of clear organisational frameworks to guide an effective response.

Aim



The Ask Me framework was developed through the voices and lived experience of children and young people living with grief, alongside parent and professionals in education.

Of 300 bereaved students surveyed, **72%** said they were never asked what support they needed and staff in education reported **Ask Me** aims to empower educators with the confidence, knowledge and skills and have compassionate conversations to explore a young person's grief and develop a personalised approach to support the young person's grief.

ASK Me: Education **co-created by** Child Bereavement UK **and bereaved children and young people, informed by educators and parents, address these gaps. Grounded in trauma-informed and developmental grief theory alongside lived experience the training package and bereavement plan provides a practical, step-by-step guide educators in leading compassionate conversations and creating tailored support by asking bereaved students directly what they need.**

Methods

A participatory, co-production design underpinned ASK Me: Education.



This approach prioritised **lived experience** alongside **education expertise** from the outset.



Throughout the design process young people were **equal partners** to create practical resources and training packages for schools.



Early implementor schools were key in the **development** and **piloting** of the resources and training programme before a wider roll out to **all schools** in the UK.

Results



1,945

Downloads
of the Ask Me
school resources.



47

Training sessions
delivered to education
professionals.



Over
13,000

Students
impacted.



99%

Educators report
more confidence in
having compassionate
conversations.

Conclusions



The Ask Me movement reflects the real power of listening and responding to the **voices** and **lived experiences** of children and young people to affect **change**. By amplifying student voices and staff experiences, a package of resources could be developed to worked in practice to meet the needs of individual students and supported the skills and experiences of the staff whilst ensuring flexibility to adjust this support as the young person's grief grows and changes throughout their time in education.

I really feel I have a better understanding and more confidence to hold compassionate conversations with the students due to the knowledge gained from the training.

Education
professional

References

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