

For children and adults to read together

# Someone has died in a road crash



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 Brake helpline **0808 8000 401** Call us for more information, advice and emotional support

# Listen up grown up!

Hi, my name's Amy and I've been bereaved by a road crash.



Hi, I'm Tom and it's happened to me too. We're here to help you read this book with children you are caring for who have been bereaved in this way.

## Here are a few tips before you get started.

### Read this book on your own first

Think about the issues raised in it and how you will answer children's questions. (It contains lots of good advice that grown ups can benefit from too.)

### It's for children of all ages

You can also read it with more than one child at once. (It isn't meant for reading with big groups of children, however.) For younger children, use the pictures as talking points.

For older children, there are interesting fact boxes.

Use the book to stimulate conversation, the sharing of grief and the giving of comfort and information.



### Find a quiet space

Make sure you are in a quiet room (without TV or radio) and your child or children are calm. Sometimes children just don't feel like reading a book!

### Read together

Explain that you are going to read the book together. Use the questions at the bottom of the pages as a prompt for discussions.

If you are grieving yourself and don't feel able to read the book with children you care for, you can ask someone else to read it for you. If you need support after a road death, you can call the Brake helpline on 0808 8000 401.

## It's up to you what you read

Don't think you have to read this book all at once. You might want to read particular pages at particular times. For example, page 9 is about emergency services and page 21 is about funerals. You might decide never to read some pages. For example, page 15 is about organ donation, which may or may not be relevant.

## Be open and honest

This book helps you to talk with children as much as possible about what happened and discuss emotions openly. Research shows it is better to tell children things in a caring and trusting environment than to keep them in the dark.

This book includes challenging subjects such as an explanation of why people die and a discussion about what different people believe happens after you die. Children often want to know about these things. The explanations are clear and dignified and non-judgmental. This is a book for everyone, whatever your beliefs.

This book is full of bright colours and pictures of Amy and Tom doing normal things like eating and playing. We've thought about what children do, and what children want to look at.



Before you begin reading this book with children, have ready a pen and a photo of the person (or people) who died and some sticky tape (see page 1).

## Involve and give choices

This book encourages you to involve your children in things and give them choices and the chance to air their thoughts. For example, pages 17 and 18 are about seeing a body and contain handy tips about what to expect if your child chooses to see a body.

## More support for children and you

Of course, reading this book won't make everything alright. A bereaved child will need lots of love and support and honest answers forever. A family that has been bereaved by a road crash will need particular support because there has been no time to prepare for the death or deaths. Go to Brake's website ([www.brake.org.uk](http://www.brake.org.uk)) for more sources of help.



Thank you for taking the time to use this book and help children.

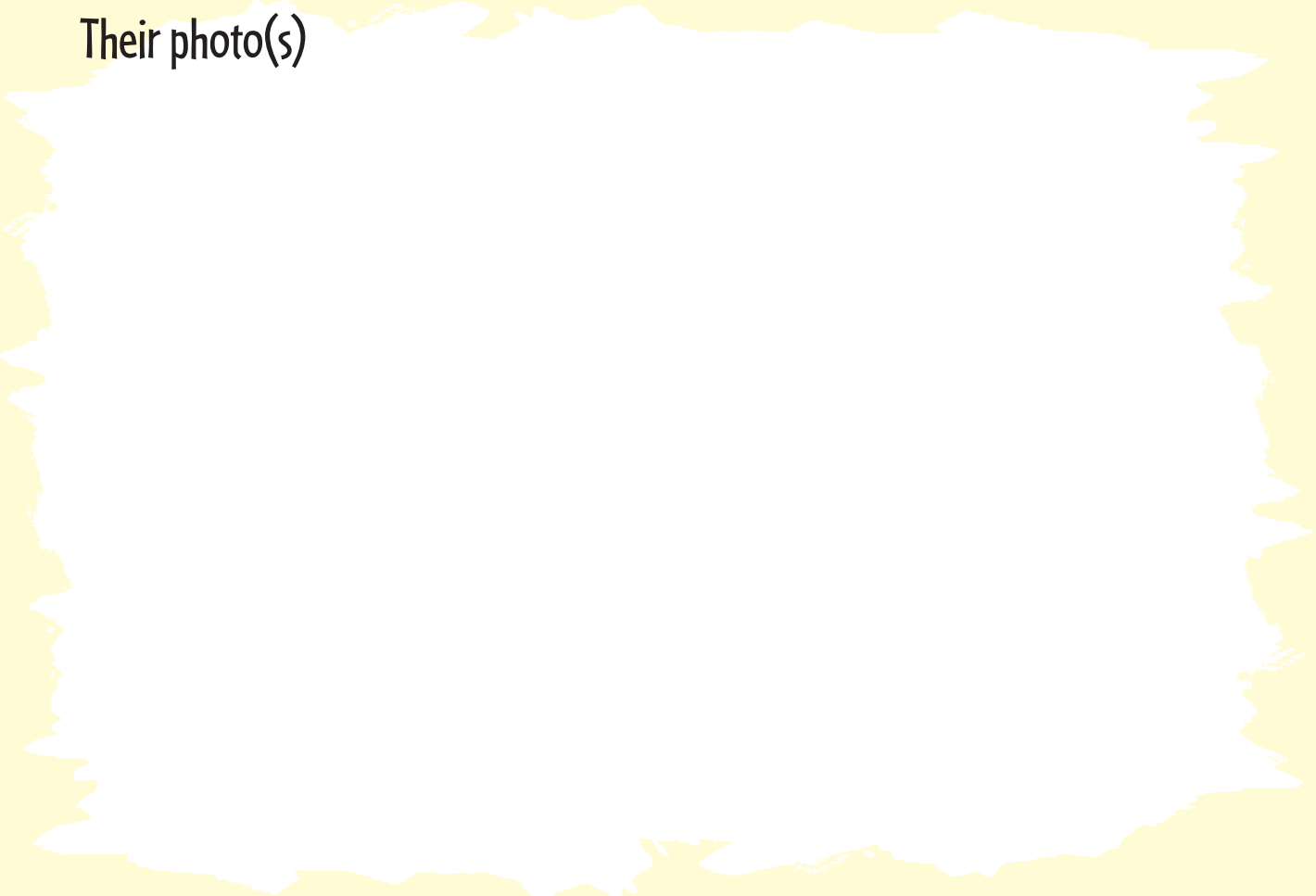
A road crash has happened.  
A very special person or people have died.  
It is very, very sad.



Their name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time they died \_\_\_\_\_

Their photo(s)



These are the names of some of the people who are very sad about it:

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## This book has been written to help YOU.

This book will help you understand what happened, how you feel about it and some of the things that are going to happen now.

Hi, my name's Amy.

My mum and my sister were killed in a road crash. I'm going to tell you some things that might help you, because they helped me.

It's really terrible when someone you know dies. A grown up who cares about you is going to help you read this book and talk about the things in it.

You probably won't read it all at once – just a bit at a time.



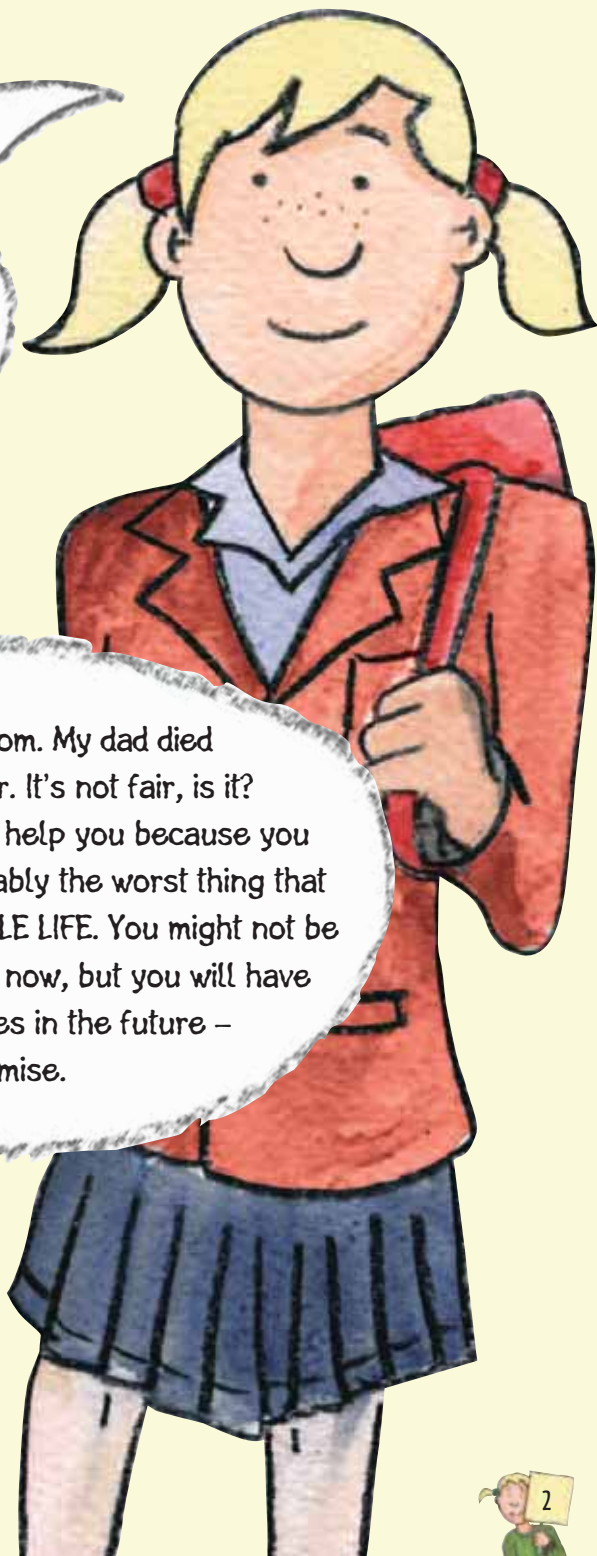
Hi, my name's Tom. My dad died

in a crash last year. It's not fair, is it?

Lots of people want to help you because you are so sad. This is probably the worst thing that will happen in your **WHOLE LIFE**. You might not be able to imagine it right now, but you will have

**LOTS** of good times in the future –

I promise.



Do you want to read some of this book now?


# Why did they die?

People die in road crashes when their bodies are too badly damaged in the crash to work anymore.


Sometimes, people who are dead look like they're asleep, but sadly they're not. Dead people can never wake up.

When someone dies, they stop breathing forever. Their brain stops thinking and their body stops moving.

People think different things happen when someone dies.



Some people think that everyone has a special spirit, which some people call a soul. When someone dies, their spirit leaves their dead body and goes somewhere else. Different people belong to different religions and think different things about where the spirit goes.




Some people don't think spirits exist. They think that the part that makes people special is their brain, inside their head. This is the part of the body that thinks and controls what we say and how we move. When someone dies, their brain dies too. This is because dead people do not breathe air any more and the brain needs air to survive.

What do you think happens when someone dies?

# I don't believe it has happened!

Sometimes it's hard to believe that someone is dead and you will never talk to them in the same way again.

This is because it is a terrible shock. No-one knew they were going to be in a road crash and die. No-one expected it to happen.




After my dad died, I would sometimes wake up in the morning and forget it had happened – and then remember all over again, which made me feel extra sad.

That used to happen to me, too. I always asked someone who loved me to give me a hug straight away – it made me feel a bit better.



What a lovely sleep




Oh no, I remember what happened!

Would you like a hug?

# All about shock

Shock is the nasty feeling that we get for the first minutes, hours and days when we are told something horrible. Being told that someone is dead is very, very horrible, so the shock can be really bad.

People who are in shock sometimes feel really cold and shiver, or don't want to move about much, or don't feel like talking or eating much. It's like they are frozen by the horrible news they have been told. Not everyone has this happen to them, but many people do. But with lots of love and a little time they feel a bit better and can start to get on with life again.



If you are suffering from shock, remember that these feelings are normal to begin with, and should go away. It's like being really ill. Lots of hugs with people you love really helps. So does eating your favourite food.



### Amy's top tip -

If you feel cold, get warm. Ask an adult to make you a hot water bottle! They're great to cuddle.



**GO AWAY!**



That feels a bit better



# Feeling sad

Feeling terribly sad is the most normal feeling of all when someone dies. Everything can feel miserable.

Sometimes it's hard to imagine ever being happy again. Sometimes it's difficult to remember a time when you were happy.



Feeling sad when someone dies has a special name. It is called **GRIEVING**. It is normal to grieve. When you grieve, you have lots of different feelings. Some of these feelings are strong. They might even be scary. They might be confusing. But it's normal to feel exactly how you do. That's what grieving is all about.

Later in this book we are going to show you some of the feelings you might have while you are grieving, and give you tips about how you can feel better.

Some people describe grieving as being a bit like going on a roller coaster. One minute you are up and at it and feel fine. The next you are down in the dumps and feel miserable.



## Tom's top tip -


When I felt really sad, I tried to remember that this is probably the saddest I will ever feel in my whole life. I knew that good things would happen in the future and that I wouldn't feel this sad forever. I hope I'm going to have a long and happy life!

Who cares about you? Who can help you feel a bit better?


# Why do road crashes happen?

Road crashes happen when people make mistakes when they are using roads. These mistakes mean that vehicles crash into other vehicles, or objects such as trees, or into people who are walking or cycling, or even on horses.

No-one wants road crashes to happen. No-one wants people to die in road crashes.



Crashes are caused by many things. Sometimes people drive too fast, and they cannot stop in time when they see someone on the road ahead. Sometimes people drive when they have been drinking alcohol or taking drugs, or when they are too tired, or when they are not wearing their glasses, or when they are not concentrating.



Sometimes people drive vehicles that have something wrong with their wheels or their brakes and their vehicle goes out of control. Many of these things are crimes and sometimes people go to prison for these crimes.

All grown ups must pass a test before they are allowed to drive. Some crashes are caused by drivers who haven't taken their test and shouldn't be on the road, or who are driving a vehicle they stole.

# What happened in the crash?

Sometimes it's obvious what happened in a crash. Sometimes, the police need to carry out an investigation to find out what happened.



You can write down what you know about the crash here:

Where did the crash happen? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Who was there? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My dad died crossing the road. He was hit by a van going too fast. I was at school when it happened. My teacher told me my dad had gone to hospital and my mum was picking me up. When we got to the hospital the doctor told me my dad was too badly hurt to get better and he had died.

What do we think happened? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

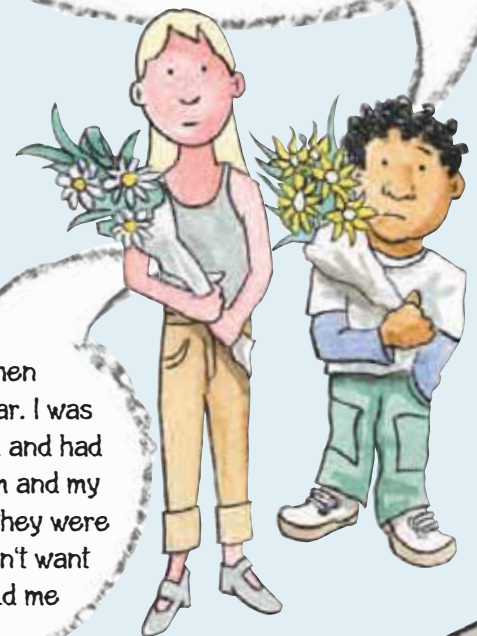
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My mum and sister died when another car crashed into our car. I was in the car too and broke my arm and had to go to hospital. I knew my mum and my sister were badly hurt because they were very quiet after the crash. I didn't want to believe it when my dad told me they had died.



Some people choose to put flowers where someone has died in a crash.

# All about the emergency services

When people are hit in a road crash, someone phones for an ambulance as soon as possible.

An ambulance is like a little hospital on wheels. It has beds, medicine and other medical equipment in it.

Medical staff called paramedics come in the ambulance. Their job is to try to save the life of the dying person and take them to hospital in the ambulance.



Sometimes an air ambulance is used.  
An air ambulance is a helicopter.

Sometimes a fire engine also goes to the crash. This is because fire officers are trained to rescue people who are trapped inside vehicles.



If someone dies before they can be taken to hospital, the ambulance takes their body to a building called a mortuary.

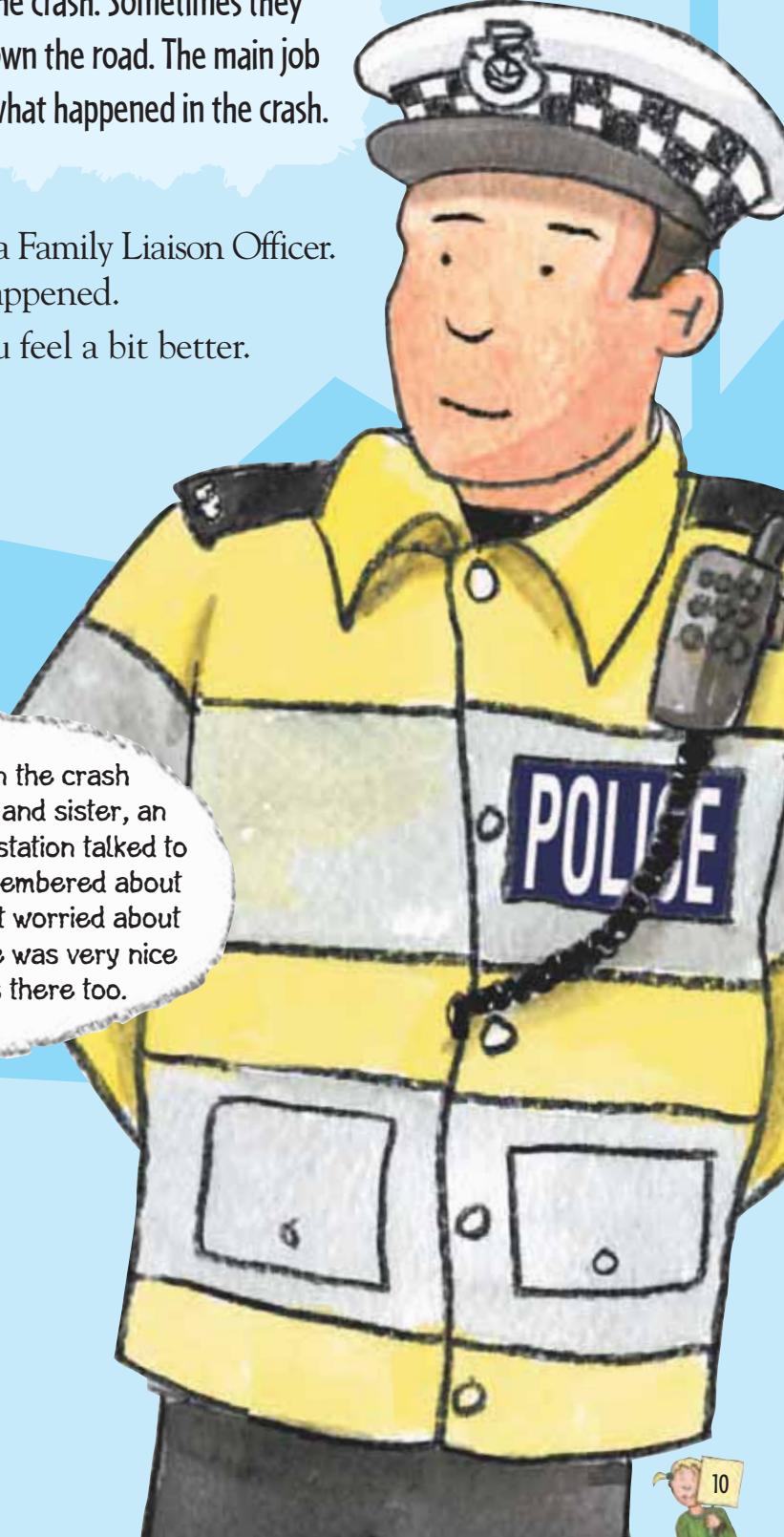
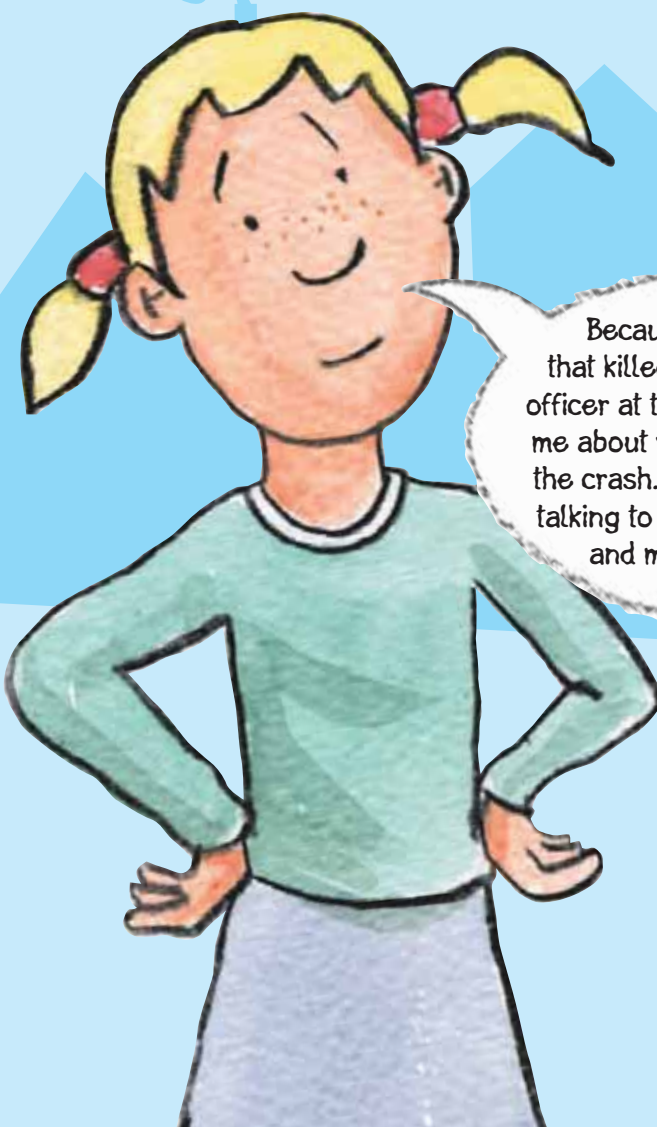




# All about the police

The police also come to the crash. Sometimes they stop other traffic coming down the road. The main job of the police is to find out what happened in the crash.

You might meet a special police officer called a Family Liaison Officer. Their job is to help you understand what happened. Understanding what happened can help you feel a bit better.



Because I was in the crash that killed my mum and sister, an officer at the police station talked to me about what I remembered about the crash. I was a bit worried about talking to him but he was very nice and my dad was there too.

# Why do road crashes kill people?

When part of a vehicle hits part of a person's body in a road crash it can cause terrible damage which can kill that person. This is because vehicles are very hard and people are soft.

Sometimes you can see the damage because it is on the outside of a person's body and has damaged their skin. But sometimes you can't see the damage because it is inside a person's body.

Everyone has important machinery inside their body called 'organs'. Our lungs breathe air in and out of our body. Our stomach turns the food we eat into energy.

People's bodies are damaged in lots of different ways in road crashes, depending on which bits of their body are hit. Road crashes can damage people's heads, chests, tummies, arms or legs.





Our brain does all the thinking so we can talk and move. Our heart pumps our blood around our body.

Sometimes, one or more organs are damaged in a road crash and don't work any more and the person dies.

Which bits of your special person's body were damaged in the crash and why did this mean they died?

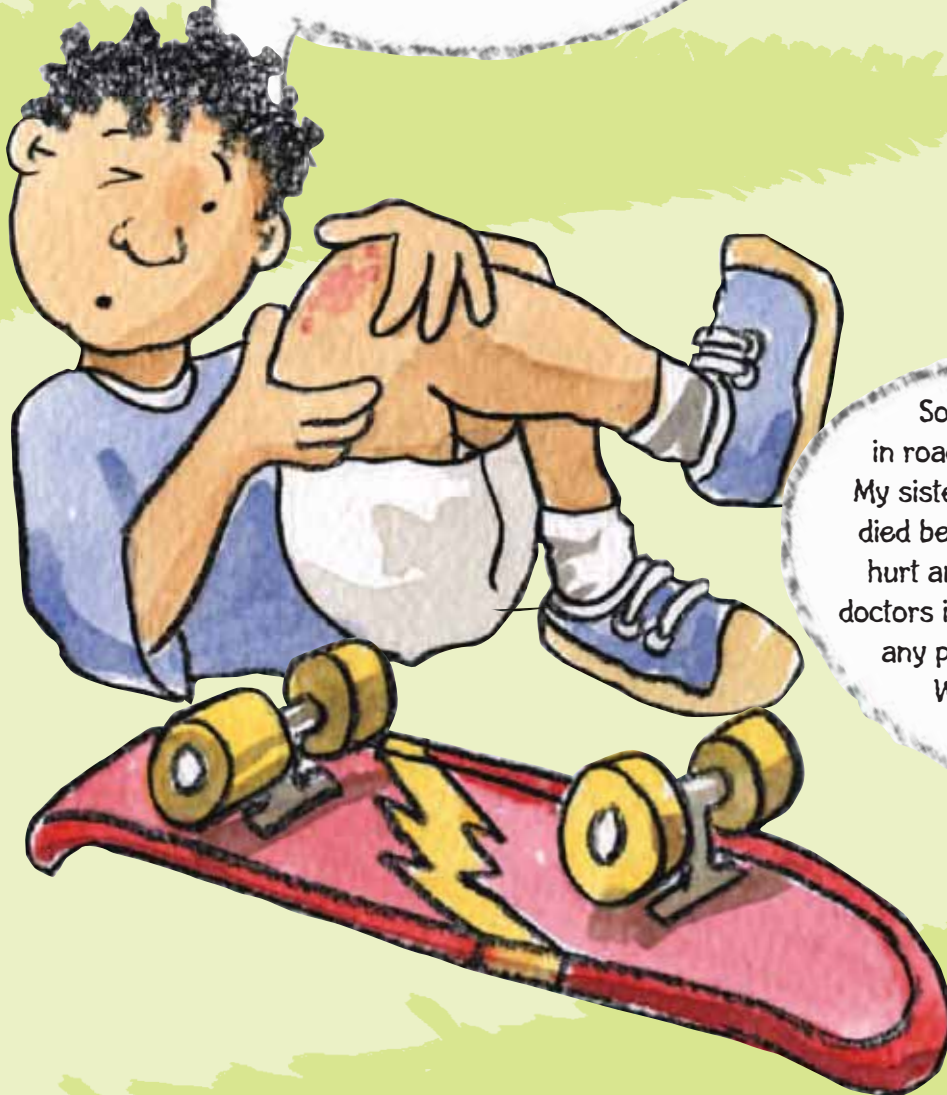
# What does it feel like to die in a road crash?

Everyone knows what it feels like to be hurt. Have you ever fallen over and hurt your hands and knees? It's painful and it can make you cry.

When someone dies in a road crash it is very different. They don't feel anything because dead people can't feel anything. They can't feel hurt even though they were hurt very badly.



Sometimes people who die in road crashes don't die straight away. My sister lived for two weeks but then she died because her body was just too badly hurt and she couldn't get better. But the doctors in the hospital told me she didn't feel any pain because she was unconscious. When you are unconscious you are asleep and can't feel pain.





# Dying in a hospital



Some people who die in road crashes die at the place where the crash happened, but some die after they have been taken by ambulance to a hospital.



When someone hurt in a road crash arrives at hospital they go straight to a special bit of the hospital called the Accident and Emergency Department.

Doctors in this department try to help the person to live. This includes trying to help them to breathe and trying to stop any bleeding. But often the person dies because their body is just too badly damaged for the doctors to save their life.

Sometimes the person doesn't die straight away and is carefully taken to another special bit of the hospital called an Intensive Care Unit.

Here, doctors look after the person using special medicine. This includes medicine that stops the person hurting and that often sends them to sleep. When someone is asleep they cannot feel hurt.

Sometimes the person survives for days or even months but then sadly dies. The doctors tried really hard to save the person's life, but they were just too badly hurt.

# Giving parts of a dead body to someone who is still alive to help them get better

Sometimes, parts of a dead body can be removed and used to help poorly people who need these parts to get better.

For example, somebody who has gone blind might be able to see again because part of a dead person's eyes are removed and put in the blind person's eyes.

Sometimes someone with a poorly lung who cannot breathe properly can have their poorly lung removed and replaced with a lung from a dead person's body.

Moving part of a dead person's body into a living person's body is called a 'transplant'. Sometimes it is called 'organ donation'. Donation means to give something for free.

It's a present from someone who's died to someone who's alive.

Doctors called surgeons carry out a transplant. The living person is given medicine to make them sleep during the transplant.

Sometimes organ donation isn't possible because the dead body is too badly damaged.



Many people think a transplant is amazing because it is something good that happens after something terrible. They want part of their special person's dead body to be used in this way.



Some people don't want part of their special person's body to be transplanted because they don't want part of their body taken away from the rest of the body. That's ok, too.



# Can I see their body?

Some children want to see their special person's body.

Some children want to touch or kiss the body for the last time, to help them say goodbye and to see with their own eyes that they are dead.

Sometimes the body of someone who has died in a road crash is so badly damaged that it does not look like the person who has died. Someone can tell you if your special person's body is very badly damaged and you can decide, with their help, whether or not you want to see the body. If you want to see the body, but it was very badly damaged, it may be possible for you to see a part of their body that wasn't so badly damaged.



Sometimes a body is not damaged on the outside, and all the damage is on the inside.



Some children do not want to see a dead body. They want to remember someone as they were when they were alive. You do not have to see a body if you don't want to.

**What does your special person's body look like?  
Do you want to see it?**

# Seeing a body

If you decide you are going to see a body you will probably go to a special building called a mortuary where bodies are kept before a funeral.

If you are going to see a body, there are some useful things to remember.



- 1.** If you touch their body it will feel cold. This is because their blood has stopped pumping round their body.
- 2.** Sometimes the skin on dead bodies is a different colour to skin on live bodies. You can ask an adult if the body's skin is going to be a different colour before you see it. That way you don't get a shock.
- 3.** Different people have different feelings when they see a body. You might want to cry. You might not. You might want to spend a long time with the body. You might not. Whatever you feel is absolutely fine and normal.
- 4.** You are going into a building where dead bodies are kept. But this doesn't mean you will see lots of dead bodies. You will only see your special person's body.
- 5.** The people who work in mortuaries know you are sad. They won't be surprised if you cry or show any other feeling at all.

I decided to see my special person's body. It was OK. It helped me understand that they were definitely dead. I'm glad I went, but different people feel differently about it.



# What happens to my special person's body now?

A doctor called a pathologist will look at your special person's body to find out how it was damaged in the crash and why this meant they died.



## Tom's top tip -

The pathologist does an important job. They are finding out the facts - why your special person died.

# What happens to the body then?

One of two things will happen to your special person's body. It will either be burnt or it will be buried. This can't hurt the person who has died. Dead bodies can't feel anything.

Bodies are burnt in a very hot fire. This is called cremation. The body is cremated until every bit of it turns to dust, called ashes. Sometimes, people keep the ashes in a pot called an urn. Sometimes they scatter the ashes in a place that was loved by the person who has died, or in a special garden for the dead called a cemetery or graveyard.



Some bodies are buried in the ground, in a graveyard or cemetery or in a special wood or field. Often they are buried in a special box called a coffin or wrapped in a cloth called a shroud. Where someone is buried is called a grave. You can tell where a body has been buried because there is a big stone with writing on it or something else on the grave to show you. When the body is buried it decays and becomes part of the earth. This means that after a year only the bones will be left. This is called a skeleton.

Bodies must be buried or burnt. If they weren't there would be millions of skeletons lying around the place.

## What's going to happen to your special person's body?



## We are having a funeral

A funeral is a special day when everyone who knew the person who has died gets together to say goodbye to them and remember them.

Lots of people at a funeral know each other and talk to each other and often hug each other. Often people cry at a funeral.



Sometimes, people laugh at a funeral too! This isn't because they are happy that someone has died, but because they are remembering wonderful things about the dead person's life and how lovely they were.

### Amy's top tip -

The funeral is a special day for remembering your special person. But you will go on remembering your special person forever.

### Did you know?

People with different beliefs do different things at funerals. It is traditional to wear black at a Christian funeral, but sometimes people wear colourful clothes. At a Hindi funeral it is traditional to ring bells and eat cakes.

Different people do different things at funerals. Often, the body of the person who has died will be cremated or buried during the funeral. People talk about the person who has died. Sometimes people sing or read poetry, or, if they have religious beliefs, say something about their religion.

What is going to happen at your special person's funeral? Do you want to go?





# Punishing dangerous drivers

If a driver crashes and kills someone, the driver might have broken a law. Laws are rules that everyone has to follow.

A driver has broken a law if they drive dangerously or drive a vehicle that doesn't work properly – for example, its brakes don't work and it can't stop.



If the police think a driver caused a crash by breaking a law the police can arrest them.

# Punishing dangerous drivers

## (Continued)

A driver who the police think has broken a law has to go to a room called a court and sit in front of an official person often called a judge or magistrate. The judge listens to the police tell them what happened in the crash. Sometimes, ordinary grown ups, who normally do other jobs, have to come along and listen. They are called a jury.

Sometimes nobody is blamed for a crash. Sometimes a driver who broke a law also died in the crash, so they can't be punished.

These people help decide whether the driver broke a law or not. If the driver did break a law, then they are punished. Sometimes the driver is sent to prison. Sometimes the driver is not allowed to drive. Sometimes the driver has to pay a fine.

Sometimes an official person called a coroner also investigates what happened in the crash. Their job is to find out why and how someone died in the crash.




### Tom's top tip -

A judge might wear a black gown like Amy on this page. Sometimes judges even wear wigs!





Is a driver going to court?







I have lots of different thoughts and feelings. Sometimes I feel really cross, and sometimes I think that no one else understands how I feel. Sometimes I want a hug and sometimes I just want to be on my own.



## Your feelings matter more than anything

The next pages talk about your feelings and give tips about how to cope and feel a bit better.



Talking to people about how I feel makes me feel a bit better. I like talking about my dad and remembering all the fun things we did together. I'll never forget my dad but I know it's OK to be happy and enjoy my life.

# Common feeling 1 I WANT TO CRY



It's good to cry. Crying is the most natural thing to do when you feel really sad. Some people think it is girly or weak. It isn't. I cried heaps and heaps when my dad died. I cried at the funeral, I cried at school and I cried at bed time. I even cried in the shower – that's a good place to cry because you don't need a tissue!



## Tom's top tip –

Cry on someone's shoulder when you have a hug! Sometimes getting some fresh air, doing some exercise or playing your favourite music can help as well.

Sometimes I would try not to cry. I would bottle up my feelings and pretend I was alright. But it never made me feel better. It was much better to blub! You can cry any time you like, wherever you like. Sometimes I didn't feel like crying, and that was OK too.



## Amy's top tip –

After you stop crying have a big glass of your favourite drink and maybe a biscuit or chocolate to give you some energy. It will make you feel a bit better.



When my mum and my sister died, my dad cried a lot too. I'd never seen him cry before. But then I understood he was as upset as me and it was OK for him to cry too. My dad still cries sometimes now but not as much as he used to.

What do you like to do after you have been crying?



# Common feeling **2** I'M REALLY ANGRY



Sometimes I would feel really grumpy. I was really mad that my mum and sister had died. I was really cross that they weren't there any more. They couldn't play with me. They couldn't talk to me. Why hadn't somebody else died, instead of them?

One day when I felt really angry I beat up my favourite toy. Luckily it could be mended afterwards! After that, I used to hit a cushion instead. I called it cushion rage! The cushion got a bit squishy but it didn't matter and it made me feel better.

When I felt angry I would jump up and down and shout and scream. But that was OK. Everyone knew it was because I was very sad and I was letting out my feelings. I felt tired afterwards, but a bit better.

## Amy's top tip -

Cushion rage is more sensible than hitting another person or hitting something hard or even hitting yourself. If you ever think you want to do those things, take it out on a cushion instead, or a pillow, and tell someone you trust how angry you feel. Exercise can help you feel better too.

What do you want to do when you feel angry?

# Common feeling **3** IT WAS MY FAULT



When someone dies, the people who love them sometimes worry that it was their fault.

When my mum and sister were alive, I used to worry that they might die. I even worried that they would be killed in a road crash! I was really scared it would happen. When it actually happened, I thought that it was my fault. I thought they had died because I had imagined them dying. This is wrong and I don't think it any more.

IT WAS MY FAULT

Sometimes I think 'if only...' If only I had stopped us getting in the car that day. Then I remember that I couldn't have known we were going to crash. It isn't my fault they died.

NO IT WASN'T!

Once, when my dad was alive, I had a fight with him. I said: "I wish you were dead!" I didn't mean it, but when he died, I thought it was my fault. Now I understand that nothing I said made the crash happen. I try to remember the nice things I said to my dad and the fun times we had together.

Nothing you thought, or said, or did made the crash happen. It wasn't your fault.

# Common feeling **4** I FEEL ALONE



Feeling lonely is horrible. But you aren't alone. There are lots of people who want to help you and can help you feel better.



I felt that no-one understood how I was feeling and they wouldn't be able to help me feel better. I felt different to all the other children at my school. What you have to remember is this – other people can't always tell how you are feeling just by looking at you. Sometimes I had a happy face but I felt miserable inside.



## Tom's top tip –

The best thing is to talk to someone you trust and tell them how you are feeling. Then they can talk to you and help you feel a bit better and not alone.

When I didn't want to talk I used to visit some websites that are for children whose special people have died. It can also help to read more books about when a special person dies. You can ask an adult to phone the Brake helpline. They can give details of charities that have online chat rooms and more books for children.

Sometimes I thought I was the only person in the whole world who was so sad. Then I remembered that a girl in my class at school had been to a funeral last year. I talked to her and now we are friends. She understands how I feel.



Do you feel lonely sometimes?  
Is there anyone you want to talk to?  
Has anyone been kind or unkind to you?

# Common feeling **5** THINGS THAT OTHER PEOPLE SAY

Sometimes other people might say daft things to you because they don't understand about death or how you are feeling.

For example, some adults think that children don't understand death. So they say things like 'your special person has gone to sleep'. Or, 'I'm sorry you have lost your special person'. You know they aren't asleep or lost. They are sadly dead.

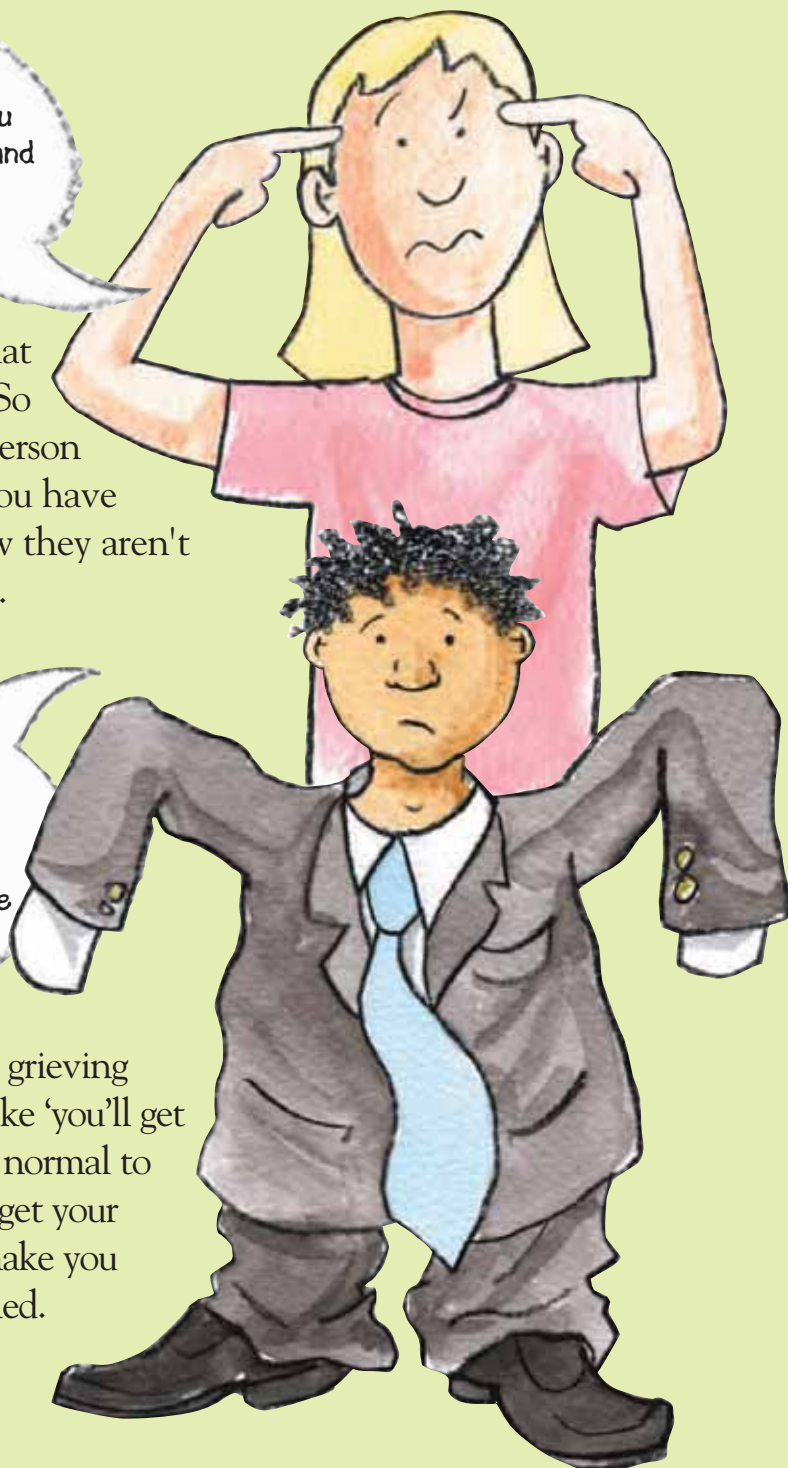
Sometimes adults say things like 'you've got to be strong' or 'you're the man or woman of the house now'. This is really silly. It's important to grieve and you are still a child and need to be looked after.

Some people don't understand that grieving takes a long time. They say things like 'you'll get over it' or 'don't think about it'. It's normal to be happy again, but you'll never forget your special person and no-one can make you forget them or the fact they've died.



## **Amy's top tip -**

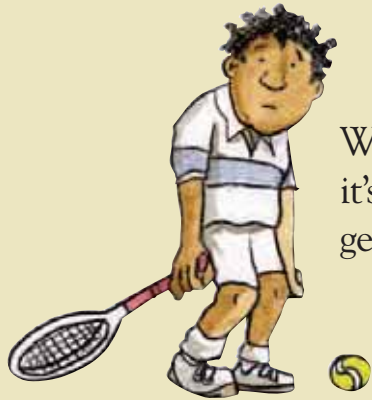
Some people who don't know you very well might say 'I know how you feel' when they don't know how you feel at all! They're trying to help.



Has anybody said anything silly to you?  
Who understands how you feel?



# Common feeling **6** I JUST DON'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING ANY MORE



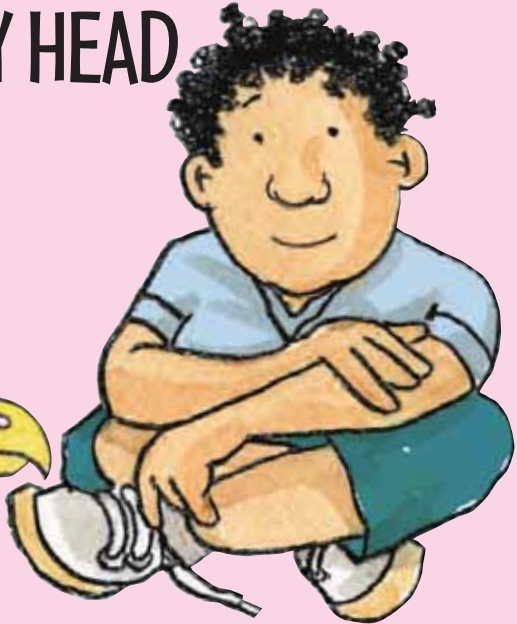
When we are really sad, it's difficult to have any get up and go.

When I was asked if I wanted to go to the park I used to answer: 'No, sorry, my get-up-and-go got-up-and-went!' I just didn't want to do anything. There didn't seem any point because I was so sad. Then my friend Ahmed introduced me to a new hobby – indoor rock climbing! I have lots of fun doing it and it's something I really look forward to every week.

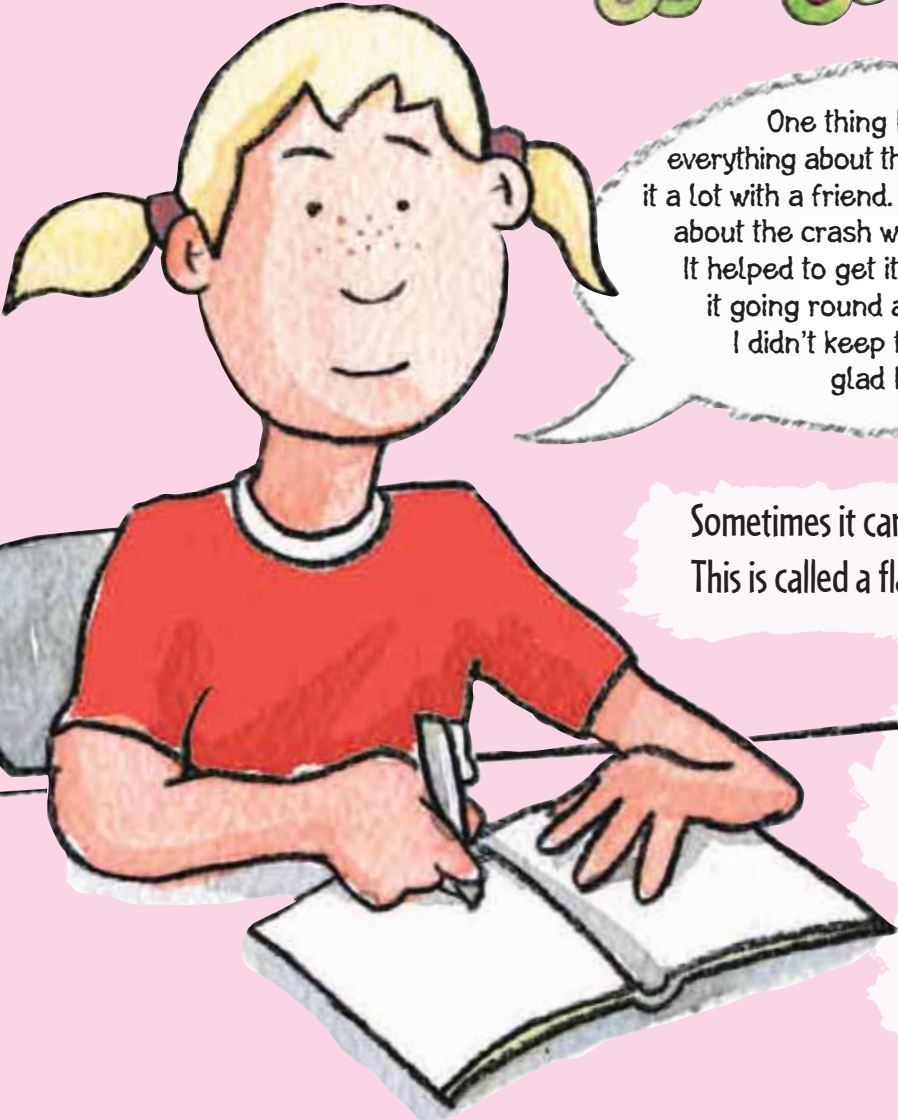


After my dad died, I didn't even want to go to school. I just couldn't be bothered. I didn't want to talk to my friends because I didn't think they would understand how terrible I felt. But one of my teachers was really kind. She talked to me and let me take time out of lessons when I was feeling upset. It got better and I started enjoying school again.

# Common feeling **7** I CAN'T GET THE CRASH OUT OF MY HEAD



Most children want to know exactly what happened in the crash. I know I did! It's much better to know than have lots of questions that nobody answers. My imagination is quite good and I think it's better to know the truth than make it up in your head from bits of information.



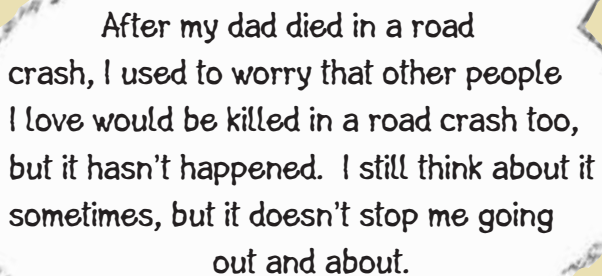
One thing I did when I knew everything about the crash was to talk about it a lot with a friend. I even drew some pictures about the crash while talking to my friend. It helped to get it on to paper. It stopped it going round and round in my head. I didn't keep the pictures, but I'm glad I drew them.

Sometimes it can feel like it's happening all over again. This is called a flashback. Not everyone has flashbacks.

It can help to talk to someone called a counsellor. A counsellor is someone who helps people like you to talk about what has happened to try to help you feel a bit better. A grown up can ask Brake to help you find a counsellor, see page 43.

# Common feeling **8** ARE OTHER PEOPLE I KNOW GOING TO DIE IN A ROAD CRASH?

No-one knows what good or bad things may happen in the future. But most people don't die on roads.



After my dad died in a road crash, I used to worry that other people I love would be killed in a road crash too, but it hasn't happened. I still think about it sometimes, but it doesn't stop me going out and about.

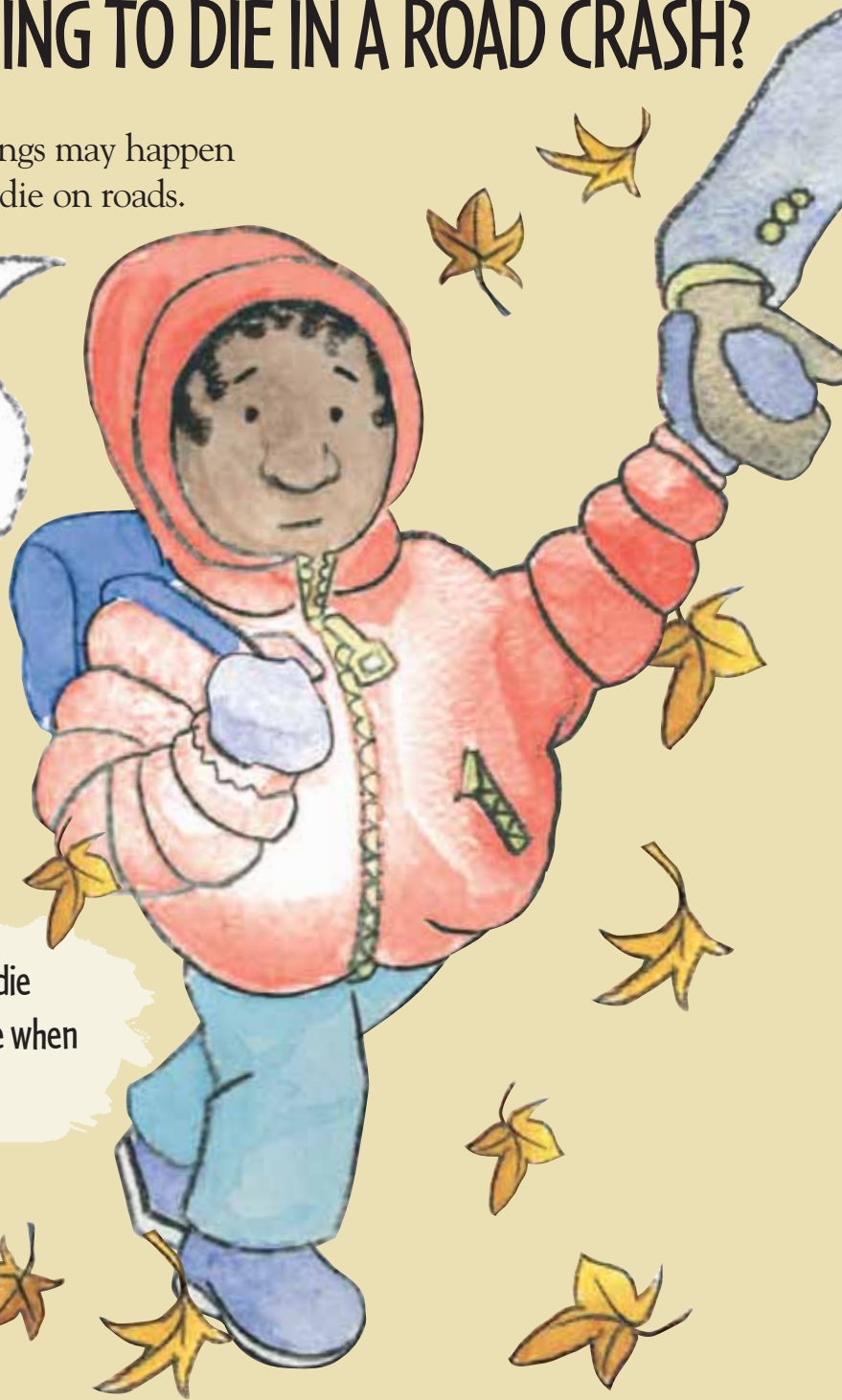
Every year, some people die in road crashes, but most people walk, cycle and drive on roads without ever being harmed.

Everyone dies eventually, but most people die when they are old. It is far more common to die when you are old than on the roads.



### **Amy's top tip -**

Turn to page 39 for tips on how to be as safe as possible on roads.



Are you worried anyone else will die?  
Are you worried about dying?

# When will I feel better?

You will probably have different feelings at different times. Sometimes you will feel happy and sometimes you will feel sad. Sometimes you will have different feelings at the same time. Sometimes you might not feel anything at all. When you are feeling terribly down in the dumps it is important to remember that you WILL stop feeling so sad. Maybe you already feel a tiny bit better now you have read this book.

There is an old saying that time is a great healer. It's a bit corny, but it's true. It means that as time passes, you will start to feel less sad and more happy. It doesn't mean you are forgetting someone who died. You will remember them **FOREVER**.



## Tom's top tip -

It helps to look forward to things. Do you have a holiday coming up? What are you looking forward to?

What do you like doing?



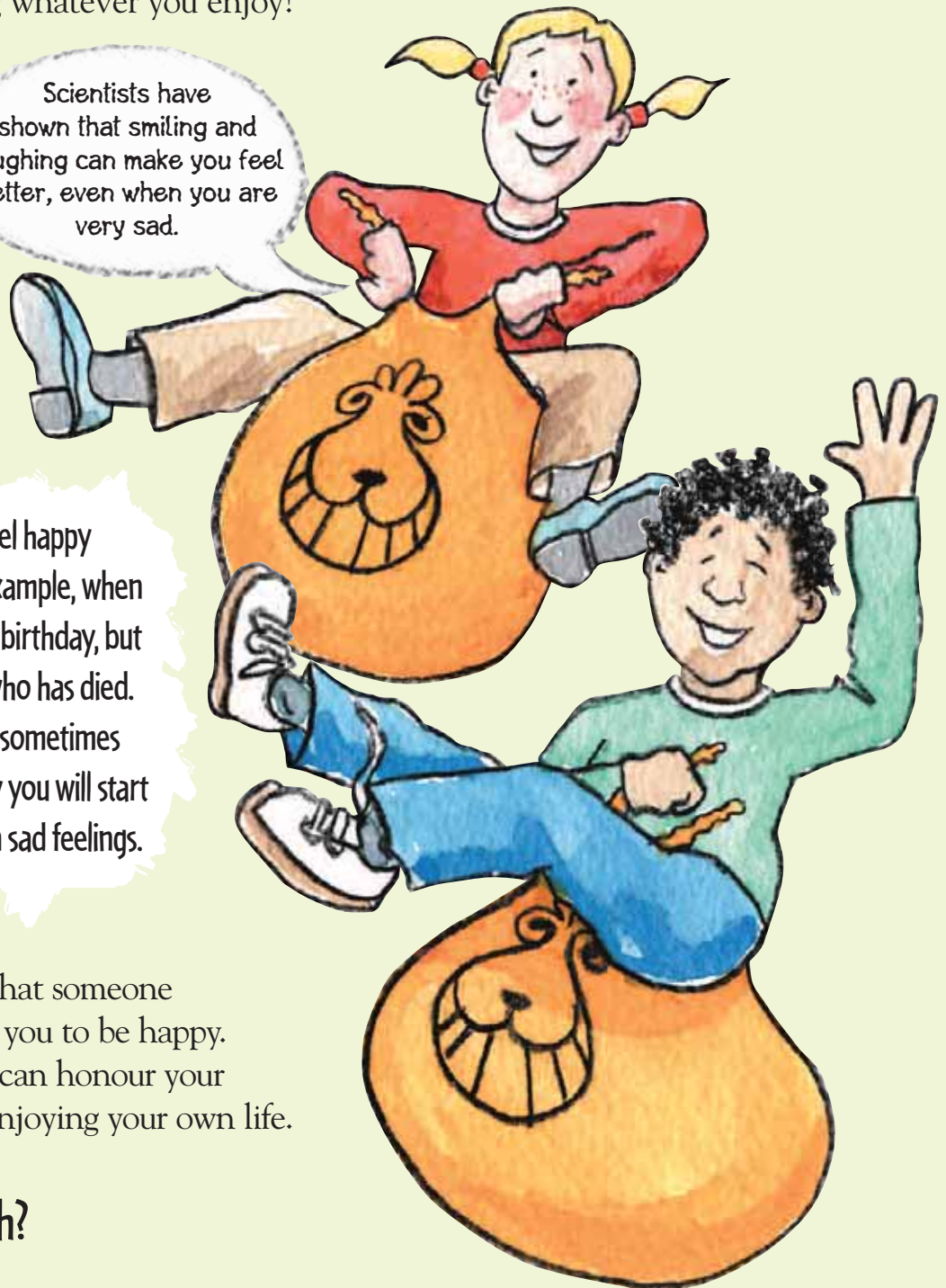
It helps to spend time with people you love and trust doing fun things, like playing your favourite game or doing a hobby.

# Having fun is good for you



You don't have to smile or laugh or have a good time if you don't want to. It's OK to be sad whenever you feel like being sad. But if you do want to have a good time, then that's great. Enjoy yourself doing whatever you enjoy!

Scientists have shown that smiling and laughing can make you feel better, even when you are very sad.



Sometimes you can even feel happy and sad at the same time. For example, when you get a great present on your birthday, but you can't show it to someone who has died.

This is a strange feeling that is sometimes called a mixed feeling. Eventually you will start to feel more happy feelings than sad feelings.

It can help to remember that someone who has died would want you to be happy. One of the best ways you can honour your special person's life is by enjoying your own life.

## What makes you laugh?

# How to remember

There are lots and lots of ways you can remember someone who has died. Just because they aren't there doesn't mean that your feelings and memories about them will go away.



Here are some top tips to help you remember them.

## Amy's top tips -

Go somewhere special that reminds you of them. Where would you like to go?

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Just sit and think about them in your head. You can think about them any time you want!  
Try to think about the happy times you spent together. What do you want to think about?

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Talk about them to someone who knew them too.  
Make a list of people you can talk to here -

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## Tom's top tip -

You can draw pictures too. I drew a picture of dad and me playing football. I've stuck it on my bedroom wall next to a photo of him.





### Tom's top tip -

Make a special box out of a shoe box covered in nice paper, or any other box you have lying around. This is your MEMORY box. Fill it with things that help you remember your special person. Mine has got all sorts in it - cards my dad sent me, photos, a lock of his hair and an old ticket for a concert we went to together.



What would you put in a memory box? Let's make one!

Sometimes, people plant a tree or a bush or a flower in a garden or a special place to remind them of someone who's died. We planted a cherry tree and I love it when it flowers each year. It'll be really massive one day.



What do you want to do to remember?

# All about them

You can use this page to help you remember. Fill in the spaces below.



Their favourite colour was \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Their favourite food was \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Their favourite hobby was \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Their favourite clothes were \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Their favourite thing to say or their favourite joke was

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

My favourite thing that we used to do together was

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Do you still like to do anything that they liked to do? It can help you remember them and the fun they had during their life.



# My poem

Another way to remember someone who's died is to write a poem about them. It's easy. Finish off the sentences below.



Our best day out was \_\_\_\_\_

It was great because \_\_\_\_\_

The weather was \_\_\_\_\_

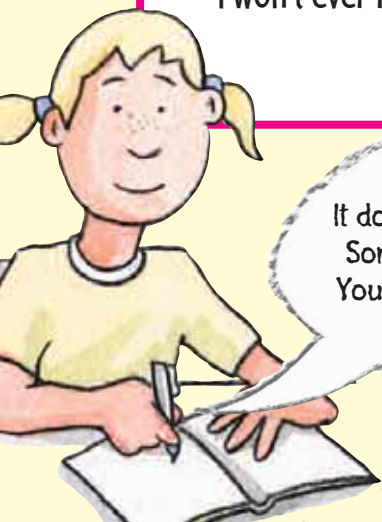
It smelt like \_\_\_\_\_

We talked about \_\_\_\_\_

The things we did included \_\_\_\_\_

When we went home \_\_\_\_\_

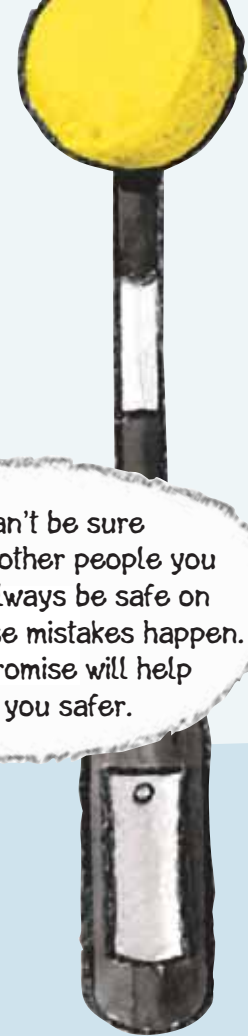
I won't ever forget \_\_\_\_\_



When you've finished, take away the words that you didn't write, and what is left behind is your poem! It doesn't have to rhyme to be a great poem. Some of the best ever poems don't rhyme. You might want to have a few attempts to get the poem that you want!

You will remember them **FOREVER**.

# There are lots of things we can do to be as safe as possible on roads



You can't be sure that you or other people you know will always be safe on roads, because mistakes happen. But this promise will help keep you safer.

You and grown ups who care for you can sign this road safety promise.



## We promise to...

- Cross roads safely at safe crossing places, looking and listening before and as we cross.
- Play away from roads in safe places such as parks and gardens.
- Take extra care if we are in a car, by travelling slowly and carefully and always looking out for other people on the road.
- Always wear our seat belts and sit quietly so the driver is not distracted.

Signed .....

Signed .....

Signed .....

Signed .....

Signed .....

Signed .....

# Back to school

You have probably had some time off school (or nursery or playgroup if you are not yet at school).

Going back and seeing all your friends can be great. But it can also be hard to begin with. Most other children don't know what it's like to experience someone close dying suddenly. They might not know what to say to you. You are probably still having strong feelings and it can be hard to feel sad when everyone around you seems to be happy.



I'm glad to be back at school. I love playing sports at break time with my friends. It makes me feel a lot better. And my best friend Dave is really nice to me when I'm feeling sad because of my dad dying.

Your teacher can talk with you about how you are feeling and how they can help you. They can let you leave a classroom quickly if you feel too sad. They can make sure there is a quiet room where you can go and someone you can talk to if you are upset.



Me and my mate Dave won 5-0!

# Our promise

This page is a special promise for you and a grown up who cares for you.  
Read it together and tick the boxes.

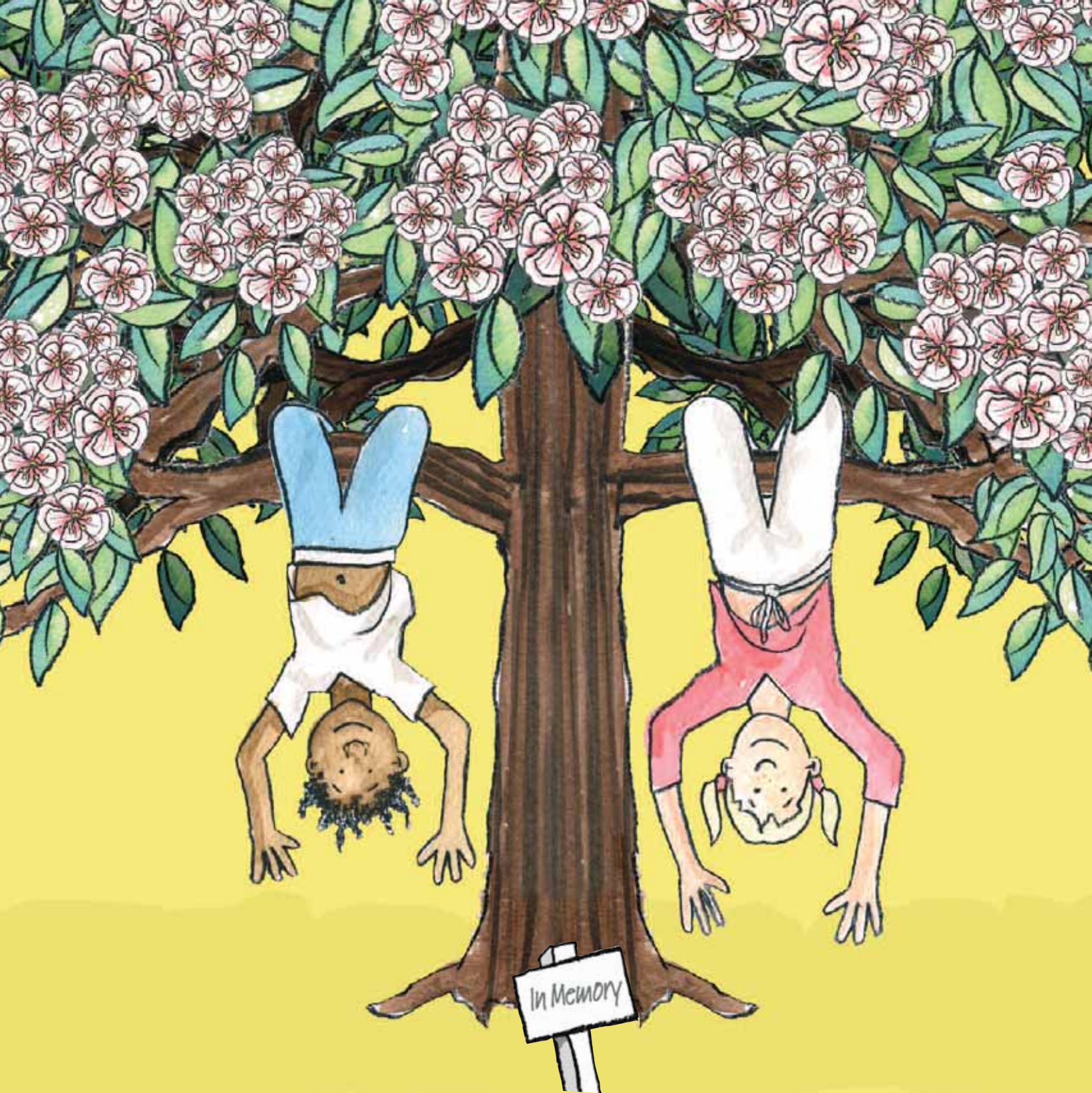


- We/I can**
- Ask questions about the crash
  - Ask you for help when I need it and cry if I am sad
  - Tell you what I need to make me feel better
  - Have a hug whenever I need one
  - Talk about my feelings, whatever they are
  - Laugh and have fun, even when I am sad
  - Keep something that belonged to my special person
  - Do something special on anniversaries
  - Have something to look forward to

- My grown up/s can**
- Be honest with me when I ask questions
  - Understand that I am very sad that my special person has died and I have lots of different feelings because of my grief
  - Tell my school what has happened and tell me who I should talk to at school if I need help
  - Talk to me about any changes in my life before they happen
  - Let me play and have fun
  - Tell me about their feelings too and cry if they are sad

Sign your names here

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| Signed ..... | Signed ..... |
| Signed ..... | Signed ..... |
| Signed ..... | Signed ..... |
| Signed ..... | Signed ..... |



We will remember our special people **FOREVER**.

## About Brake

This book is by the charity Brake. Brake supports families affected by road death and serious injury and also campaigns for safe and healthy mobility for all.

[www.brake.org.uk/victim-support](http://www.brake.org.uk/victim-support)



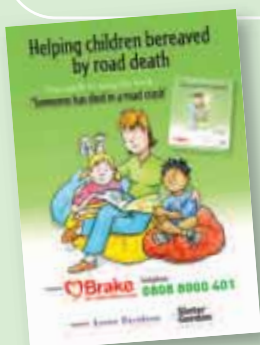
## Acknowledgements

Someone has died in a road crash and the accompanying adult guide **Helping children bereaved by road death** were developed with the help and support of a number of organisations and individuals. Thanks to:

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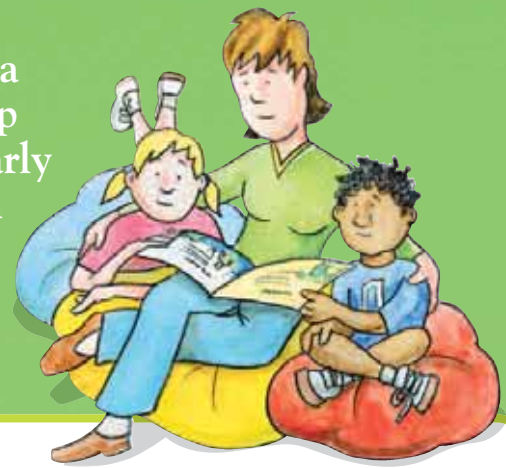
**Helping children bereaved by road death** is a guide for adults who are caring for children bereaved by a road crash. Make sure you have a copy of the guide to hand before reading this book.





When someone you love dies in a road crash it is a shattering experience, whether you are a grown up or a child. As a parent or carer, it can be particularly difficult to know what to say to bereaved children or how to behave around them.

This book has a very simple goal – to help children to cope with their grief and develop into happy and balanced people.



The book uses simple language and colourful pictures to communicate important messages and encourage discussion and honesty between children and their carers. It is a simple way for families in distress to share emotions and support each other at a bleak time. The book is narrated by two children – Amy and Tom – who have both been bereaved in a road crash and are grieving.

The book starts with an introduction to death, shock and sadness. It then gives opportunities for frank discussion about what happened, what it feels like to die and what happens to the body. This is followed by a section on different emotions that bereaved children often feel and how to cope and adjust to a new life. The book ends with a section on how to remember the person who has died, including space to write down memories in the book.

The book is by Brake, the road safety charity, which supports families affected by road crashes.

Thank you for taking the time to use this book and help children. If you wish to make a donation to Brake, go to [www.brake.org.uk](http://www.brake.org.uk).

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“ This book is wonderful and I am positive will really help children deal with and understand their grief. With its very accessible writing style and eye-catching design, it will prove an extremely useful tool for families going through a sudden bereavement. ”

**Jacqueline Wilson** children's author



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