



Certified Grief Recovery Specialist
The Grief Recovery Method®

A JOURNEY OF GRIEF, LOSS & RECOVERY

HELPING CHILDREN WITH LOSS

JILL FRAMPTON

INTRODUCTION

My name is Jill Frampton, although some will know me as Jill Samphier or Jill Fletcher. You may or may not be aware of the personal journey that led me to leave a career in teaching and follow a path into the funeral industry, however, for the last two years, I have increasingly been helping people recover from all types of grief and loss and helping children in particular, is something I am incredibly passionate about.

This is my story...

Did you know...
A parent of a
child under 18
dies every **22**
minutes in the
UK; that equates
to around **111**
children being
bereaved of a
parent **everyday!**

Child Bereavement UK

LIA

In 2001 I had a beautiful baby girl, Lia. Sadly she was born with Infantile Polycystic Kidney Disease which was so advanced we knew she had little chance of living to be old enough to have a kidney transplant.

We had the most incredible 16 days with Lia before we had to watch her precious short life slip away from us. Lia's death hit us hard yet I returned to my work as a Lecturer at our local college and immersed myself into trying to be the best Mum to Tom, my then two year old little boy.



It was during a hospital visit that a consultant, devoid of any bedside manner came in and said to us, "You do realise something is not right with this child?" It felt like a personal attack!

OLIVER

In 2003 following genetic counselling I became pregnant and after a series of early tests we were reassured that Lia's condition had not reoccurred and all was well.



Unfortunately, throughout my pregnancy I was unable to relax or enjoy this incredible time. I was unwell for the majority, suffering from a misalignment of the pelvis, which was incredibly painful and required six months on crutches barely able to put one foot in front of the other. However, after a very quick labour on New Year's Eve, Oliver was born, the last baby of 2003 on the Maternity Unit at Stafford Hospital.

I can clearly remember the overwhelming relief knowing he had arrived safely. With the hospital overlooking the town, we sat watching the many fireworks that seemed to be joining us in our own celebration.



Oliver

A midwife on the ward who had taken the time to read our notes and knew of our time with Lia, came back the following morning even though it was New Years Day and her day off. She popped her head around the door of my room, “Not stopping” she said... “I just wanted to give you this”, placing a small silver angel in my hand.

In the following weeks at home, I started to feel that something wasn’t right. The Health visitor hadn’t picked up on anything and I would convince myself ‘he was just a bit late to develop’, but deep down I knew something was wrong even when Oliver was just three or four weeks old.

It was during a hospital visit that a consultant, devoid of any bedside manner came in and said to us, “You do realise something is not right with this child?” It felt like a personal

attack! Was I such a bad mother? Why hadn’t I done something sooner? This was the beginning of what I can only describe as being thrown into a vacuum of intervention. Hospital appointments, tests, medication, portage workers and paediatric physio but all results showing nothing conclusive and there was no diagnosis.

Tom loved to be able to push Oliver around the house, it was one of the few occasions Oliver’s face would light up!

All initial thoughts about Cerebral Palsy were quickly dispelled. We were referred to the Movement Centre at Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital where specialist equipment for home was discussed and Oliver was measured for his first adapted pushchair.

On our return home we were soon surrounded by special chairs and toys, With one chair in particular that Oliver really disliked because his head had to be strapped back. However, it did have wheels which enabled Tom to push Oliver around the house, which they both loved. It was one of the few occasions that Oliver's face would light up! There was an incredible connection between them both - a deep bond of love. It was at this point that I had started to accept how very different our life would be.

I didn't think that life could be so harsh and cruel.

When Oliver was not in his chair he needed to be carried around. His body had no muscle tone yet he was heavy to carry. He often felt like a rag doll and one morning walking downstairs with him I slipped!

I managed to turn his body in front of mine, but as I fell down the stairs, his left leg had remained behind me. It was broken! I was distraught! How could I inflict such pain on my beautiful boy? Everyday that his leg was in full plaster my heart broke a little more.

Our lives were already turned upside down but then we began to face thoughts of having to move house to give us the space for Oliver and the equipment he was going to need. We had put an application forward to a local charity that supports families

called 'Promise Dreams', as Oliver needed a specialist cot bed. With all of this going on a suggestion was made by the Health Visitor that I should also start to attend Greenhall, the local special school and nursery that had a 'School For Parents'. It was similar to a playgroup but on a smaller scale and staffed by specialists. I hated it to start with!

In between weekly sessions, Oliver also had portage at home and a visit from Lynn, our Paediatric Physio from Greenhall. More hospital appointments followed further afield yet still nobody could tell us what was wrong. But as Oliver was growing it was increasingly apparent that there was something wrong, we just didn't know what it was.

Other Mums became friends. We were all on a journey we would never have chosen, but the time we spent together every Thursday was a place full of love and laughter.

Slowly, I felt at ease in joining the many wonderful activities that Greenhall offered. School For Parents was now a safe place to be and a time I looked forward to. Other Mums became friends. We were all on a journey we would never have chosen, but the time we spent together every Thursday was a place full of love and laughter with memories I will be forever grateful for.





BOND OF BROTHERS

The beginning of the summer holidays had started with a great day. Tom, now aged six, was excited to be joining Oliver on a school trip. Arranged as part of Greenhall's summer program of activities, a trip to Chester Zoo had been planned. It was a beautiful day and so good to meet with so many of the other children and parents.

On the return journey I remember Oliver coughing a few times. I had to take him out of his chair and lie him across my knee, patting his back gently to help him clear his chest. This was not unusual, in fact it was a regular, daily occurrence, but on reflection we now know that this cough was the start of something far more serious.

A few days later, Tom was equally excited as Oliver was going for a sleepover at my parents and we were

taking Tom to Alton Towers the following day. Having dropped Oliver at my parents house with all of his medications, we headed to the local pub for an evening meal, safe in the knowledge that my Mum and Dad were well-practiced in looking after Oli.

Up for an early start. I was in the bathroom when the phone rang. Tom answered it. I could hear him saying "Mummy's in the bathroom she won't be long". As I opened the door Tom passed me the phone "It's Grandad, he said it's an emergency"

I froze briefly as I heard the words "You need to get here, quickly". I grabbed Tom whilst shouting to my husband John, "It's Oliver!" We literally lived two minutes away from my parents house. We all jumped in the car and with Tom in the back we headed to my parents as quickly as we could.

A photograph of a woman with long dark hair, a young child with curly hair, and a man with a short beard sitting together. They are all looking towards a laptop screen which is partially visible at the bottom right. The woman is on the left, the child is in the middle, and the man is on the right. They are all dressed in casual clothing. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Did you know...

There are **three million children** living with single parents in this country and **90% of those are women**. That's around **1 million children** who never see their Dad.

The Guardian

#HelpingChildrenWithLoss

OUR WORST NIGHTMARE

I will never forget the scene in front of us as we turned into the quiet little cul-de-sac where my parents live.

There were ambulances and Paramedic's cars abandoned on the garden. I turned to Tom saying "stay there" as both John and I both jumped out of the car and ran into the house. My Mum, Dad and Brother were all in the lounge distraught, I ran upstairs to find a scene that will always haunt me. Oliver lying on the end of my parents bed with Paramedics and a Doctor all working on him.

When Oliver was born,
not long after we came
home with him, Tom had
asked me "Is Oliver going
to die like Lia did?"

I was screaming inside but no sound came from my lips as the Paramedic tried to explain to us what they were doing. Despite every effort made, there was no change in Oli's condition and the decision to move him to hospital was made. They continued, tirelessly to work on Oliver in the ambulance. John sat in the back while I sat alongside the driver. Blue lights were not going to make any difference...

We were losing him.

Arriving at the hospital, a swarm of staff whisked Oliver into a side room. Doctors and nurses were rushing around. We awaited the arrival of a specialist from Birmingham Children's Hospital and by now, our family had arrived.

We were taken back to Oliver where we held him, before calmly walking through to everyone else. Our whole family said their goodbye's and Oliver was smothered in kisses and tears.

My thoughts, in panic turned to Tom and where he was. Thankfully my brother had realised we had left him in the car after we had rushed into the house and had gone out to him. Our closest friends were called and they picked Tom up and took him with them. He was safe and they were bringing him up to the hospital. As time passed John and I were eventually taken into a small room.

The words that came from the consultant confirmed our worst nightmare. There was nothing more they could do. Oliver was not responding to treatment, his brain unresponsive, he was clinically dead. We were taken back to Oliver where we held him, before calmly walking through to everyone else. Our whole family said their goodbye's and Oliver was smothered in kisses and tears. It was soon after that I was aware of a subtle presence, Penny the Hospital Chaplin - a quiet, gentle and calm figure who I felt was carrying me in every step I made.

When the time came Penny slowly walked with us along the corridors to the mortuary chapel where we met a nurse from the children's ward who knew us from previous visits with Oliver. Reluctantly we handed Oli over to her and left. Moments later I turned back in panic. I needed to see where he was going to be. Penny took us back. Opening the door she led us through to the mortuary and in to a cold room. There our tiny boy lay. We sat with Oli until we felt we were able to leave.

My memory of the time that followed is very much a blank. Following that moment I can't recall anything until a few days later, when our Health Visitor came to visit us. I clearly remember her sitting next to me and taking hold of my hand, which was a comforting gesture. Then she said "At least you still have Tom". The pain I felt, the deepest pain imaginable consumed me.

Did you know...

All pets provide companionship and **reduce anxiety** which can be a huge loss and **affect daily routines of children** if they're not there anymore.



We were unable to appreciate at the time but Tom had experienced the biggest betrayal which was going to impact his life for many years.

To me, those six words said that Oliver's death was 'somehow okay and we would get over it', because we still had Tom. Tom my six year old son, who had just seen the carnage and subsequent death of his little brother. The little brother he totally idolised.

TOM'S GRIEF

When Oliver was born, not long after we came home with him, Tom had asked me "Is Oliver going to die like Lia did?" WOW where did that come from? My response to him was one of comfort and reassurance. "No of course not." I replied. In that moment of what was

a natural and protective reaction, was the untruth that would go on to create the loss of trust Tom had in all adults throughout his childhood. We were unable to appreciate it at the time but Tom had experienced the biggest betrayal which was going to significantly impact his life for many years to come.

If only I had known the impact this was going to have for Tom. Tom is now 20 years old and it has only been in the past year or so that he has opened up and begun to understand his feelings as he grew up. He tells of how scared and upset he felt when we left him in the back of the car on the morning Oliver died and he remembers the anger and hate he felt because he thought I had lied to him.

I told him Oliver would not die!

Years of being unable to move on with our lives followed. My caring, safeguarding reply had a huge effect on Tom's mental health as a child and throughout his teenage years. The impact of which could have been avoided had I only known the right way to answer his question.

That one response had, over the years added to his mistrust of adults.

In school he would never really listen to anything an adult or teacher told him and as a teenager, he was confident, self assured and sometimes cocky in his response to people.

Then he began to be angry. I lost count of the number of times doors and walls had holes punched in them. He was destructive, depressed and had little interest in anything. His attention span was short. Yet he was loving and never afraid to give hugs.

At 6ft they are big hugs. A strong strapping lad, yet his heart was broken, lost and stuck by the loss of his siblings, Lia and Oliver.

Did you know...
At the moment, it's far too difficult for children and young people to get mental health support before they reach crisis point.

YoungMinds



HOW THE GRIEF RECOVERY METHOD® TRANSFORMED OUR GRIEF

It was through a friend that I became aware of Grief Recovery UK and The Grief Recovery Method®. Prior to this I had tried a number of conventional treatments such as counselling, alternative therapies and anti-depressants. All of which had helped to a point. That was until another emotionally challenging situation came along... Then wham! I was back to square one. I couldn't bear the thought that this was how things were going to be for the rest of my life.

I was so amazed by the results, I went on to train to become a Certified Grief Recovery Specialist myself as I felt compelled to help others, with helping children in particular, the focus I am extremely passionate about.

MY OWN RECOVERY

The Grief Recovery Method® is a programme of guided self-help for anyone who has experienced a loss due to the death of someone important in their life, the end of a relationship or one of over 40 significant life events that evoke grief.

The pain and isolation I had battled with had gone, and I could now feel happy and not just ‘existing’ from day to day.

When followed in order, as a series of small steps the Grief Recovery Method® leads to the completion of all the unresolved emotions linked to the loss.

When I completed the Grief Recovery Method® for myself I felt that for the first time in years I had, at long last found something that worked and allowed me to accept and move on.

The pain and isolation I had battled with had gone and I could now feel happy and not just ‘existing’ from day to day. No longer am I haunted by the “If only”, “I should have” and “I wish I could have” anymore.

I can now think about the time we spent with Lia and Oliver and remember the moments that were full of love. Now, memories are no longer painful.

The way in which the Grief Recovery Method® has helped both my own and subsequently, Tom’s wellbeing having also completed the programme was transformational and has driven me to pursue raising its profile and the benefits that it has to so many people’s lives.

I was so amazed by the results, I went on to train to become a Certified Grief Recovery Specialist myself as I felt compelled to help others, with helping children in particular, the focus I am extremely passionate about.

I can think about the time we spent with Lia and Oliver and remember the moments that were full of love. Now, memories are no longer painful.

Did you know...

Childhood bereavement can cause reduced self esteem and academic achievement and can also result in bullying and longer-term health issues.

BEING PREPARED

For most people, having the right words and knowing what to do when those hard and difficult questions come, leave us faltering, and at worst lead us to say things which may be meant with good intention, but I have seen just how damaging words we use can be.

I feel it is important that as parents and carers we also take responsibility for making sure we too are prepared with the tools to help our children develop and maintain emotional resilience.

HAVING THE TOOLS TO HELP OUR CHILDREN

As part of my Grief Recovery Specialist training I qualified to deliver to adults the 'Helping Children With Loss' programme (HCWL) which supports and teaches parents and carers.

Training on how to support pupils is often compulsory for staff, but there is nothing offered to parents or carers. I feel it is important that as parents and carers we also take responsibility for making sure we too are prepared with the tools to help our children develop and maintain emotional resilience.

Having completed the Grief Recovery Method® himself, Tom knows that as losses impact on him in the future he will be able to use the tools he's learnt to maintain his mental health and wellbeing.

Throughout a child's life we teach them how to acquire things, new skills, friendships etc but we do not prepare them for the losses that are often unavoidable in life. Losses start from an early age and, although some may seem minor, often those early losses are the beginning of how children shape and learn what to do when emotions are sad. I wonder if you can identify with anything from your own childhood that sticks in your mind? In particular

phrases that taught you that 'sad was bad'. For example, "If you're going to cry, go to your room". Sound familiar? No wonder all these years later I was still doing the exact thing. Every time emotions became too much, before the tears came, whether I was at home or work where did I go? Either to the bathroom or my bedroom!

When Tom was facing a particularly difficult time he started to barricade himself in his bedroom, refusing to come out. I became frustrated and didn't know how best to deal with the situation. It has only been recently that he has talked to me about that time, saying it was because he didn't want me to see him crying. He remembers after Oliver died my own regular disappearances to my bedroom or the bathroom and if he asked his Dad where I was, the response he was given was "Just leave Mummy alone she will be back in a minute".

Sometimes it was certainly a lot longer than a minute. Tom couldn't understand why when he could hear I was crying, so he always knew something was wrong. This lack of emotional honesty built over the years meant that not only did Tom find placing trust in adults difficult but he became angry and depressed. Now, having completed the Grief Recovery Method® for himself, he knows that as losses impact on him in the future he will be able to use the tools he's learnt to maintain his mental health and wellbeing.

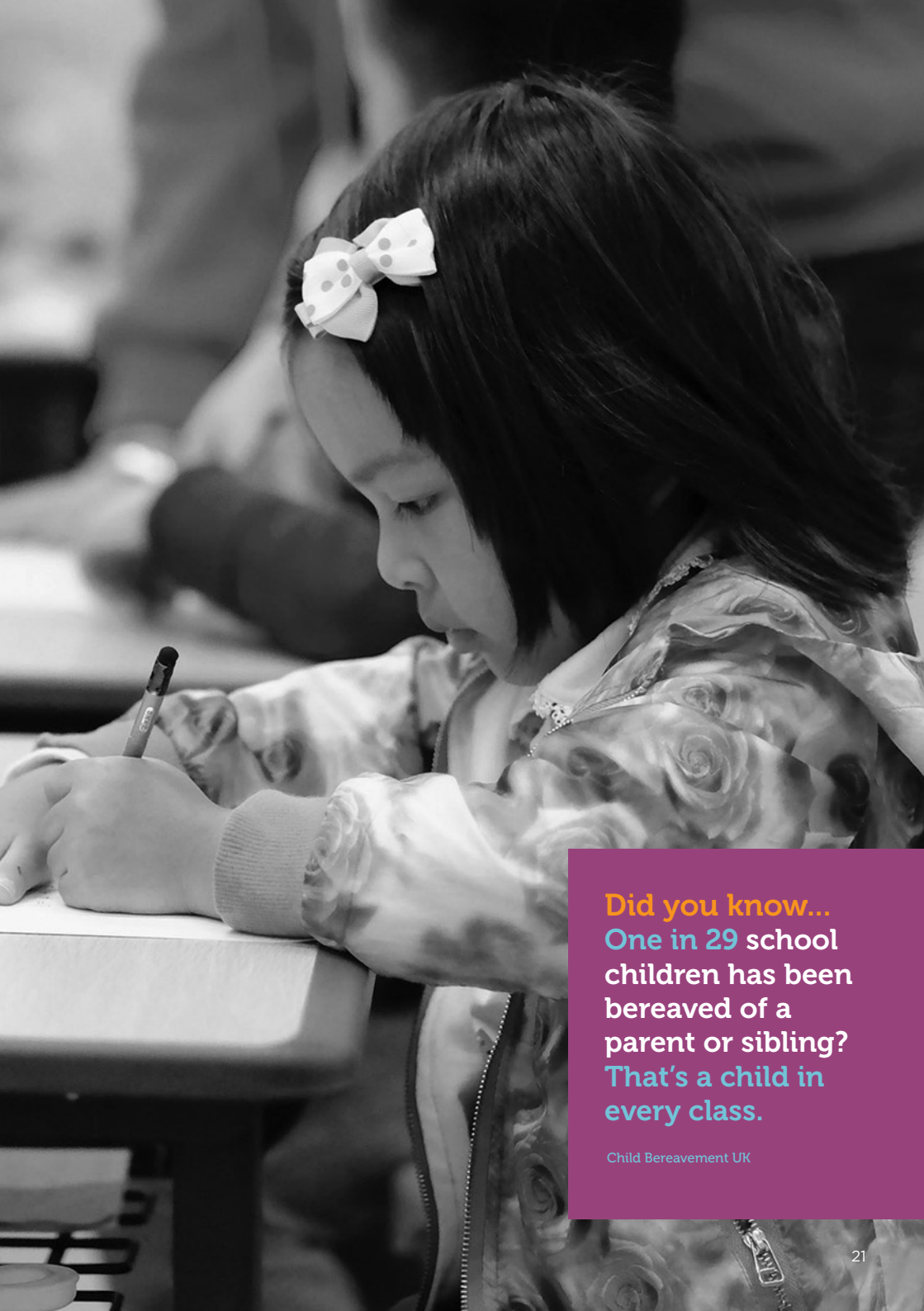
HELPING CHILDREN WITH LOSS

I strongly believe that with key early intervention and prevention along with closer to home support we can help our children and young people lead healthier and happier lives. I want to be able to provide the 'Helping Children With Loss' programme to parents and carers across Staffordshire free of charge.

'Helping Children With Loss' in part of Grief Recovery UK's Grief Recovery Method® and is recognised throughout the world.



www.griefrecoverymethod.co.uk



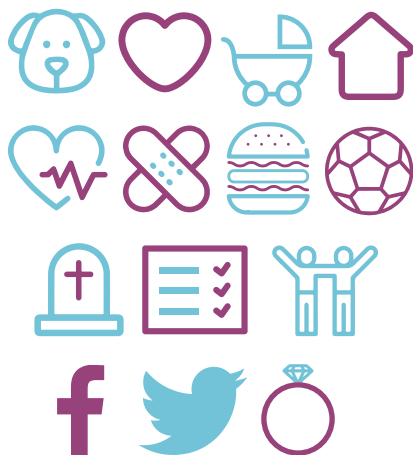
Did you know...
One in 29 school
children has been
bereaved of a
parent or sibling?
**That's a child in
every class.**

Child Bereavement UK

TACKLING ROOT CAUSES OF CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS

The 'Helping Children With Loss' programme has been **established for over 30 years** and is integral within The Grief Recovery Method®. The programme looks at dealing with some of the **root causes of child mental health problems** and **can be delivered in just four, two and a half hour, weekly sessions.**

How to process the emotional impact of loss and grief is key to long term mental and physical health and wellbeing.



Loss is associated to the change in relationship to any familiar pattern of behaviour with the normal and natural reaction to loss being grief.

In our society we are very good at teaching children how to acquire things but we do not provide them with the tools to deal with loss and there are over 40 loss events that a child may face that evoke feelings of grief including:

- Death of a close family member
- Death of a pet
- Separation or divorce of parents
- Death of a close friend
- Beginning or end of school
- Change in friendships
- Moving house / moving school
- End of a romantic relationship (teens)
- Personal injury or illness
- Change in health of a family member
- Gain of a new family member
- Change in social activities
- Change in eating habits
- Bullying (loss of trust, safety, identity)
- Social media (loss of trust, safety, identity)
- Exams (restricted curriculum choice, loss of identity)

The skills developed over the four weeks are tools that are lifelong in impact.



OBJECTIVE

My aim is to be able to provide parents and carers in our communities with the confidence and peace of mind to know that when talking to children about sad and emotional events, that their words and responses will have the most positive effect and outcome on their children's thinking, wellbeing and development.

WHAT DIFFERENCE WILL IT MAKE?

Having the correct information at our fingertips can make a significant impact on behaviour, progress and the mental health and wellbeing of our children.

So often a child's change in behaviour is connected to a loss they are or have experienced. We can then fall into the cycle of addressing the behaviour instead of looking at the root cause.

When I look back on my own life, as a Lecturer, School Governor and most importantly as a Mum, I know from first hand experience the difference this programme has made in my life, and still think, if only I had known about it 20 years ago!

WHAT DOES THE 'HELPING CHILDREN WITH LOSS' PROGRAMME PROVIDE?



Training programmes, workshops and events for families to **embed mental health, wellbeing and resilience** in our children across our communities.



Support of voluntary organisations who work directly with children to **train and prioritise the mental health and wellbeing** of current and future generations (e.g. Guiding / Scouting Women's Aid / A Child Of Mine Charity etc)



Benefit to as many families as possible across Staffordshire. The ultimate aim with additional funding is to be able to offer the programme to every primary school in the county.



Provide all of the resources required and supply each family attending the programme with the best selling book 'When Children Grieve' by John W James & Russell Friedman (HarperCollins publishers).



There will be **NO** venue hire charges incurred as we will seek the use of school community rooms within the community.



Did you know...
92 percent of
young people
in the UK will
experience what
they see as a
'significant'
bereavement
before the age
of 16.

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

#HelpingChildrenWithLoss



PLEASE CAN YOU HELP?

As the stigma associated with mental health subsides, it is both vital and important to reach those who will benefit from this revolutionary approach to grief recovery. I do hope you can assist me in my personal crusade to help children who have been affected by grief and loss, **knowing that there is a way forward.**

Thank you.



is recognised by:





Certified Grief Recovery Specialist
The Grief Recovery Method®

#HelpingChildrenWithLoss



The Grief Recovery Method®



Helping Children with Loss

THANK YOU FOR READING MY STORY.

**For more information
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I do hope you can see the
benefits that this project
will have to children and
families. If you are able
to help make this programme
a success, please visit my
website below:

 JillFrampton  @JillFramptonGR



www.jillframpton.co.uk