



London Children and Young People (CYP) Homicide Service

The London CYP service works with children and young people aged 4-17 (18-21 on a case-by-case basis) who have witnessed or have been bereaved by homicide.

Early experiences can have a lasting impact on a young person's life, if young people have been affected by trauma, such as losing a sibling or witnessing a homicide, we need to ensure that they are supported in a timely, effective and caring way.

The effects of trauma on young people can result in difficulties with focusing or learning at school, poor skill development, difficulties in social situations, showing challenging behaviour and a lack in self-confidence.

The London CYP Homicide service provides a dedicated caseworker who builds a trusting relationship while delivering specialist intervention, enabling young people to understand and come to terms with their feelings and emotions.

How we work:

The CYP service provides practical, emotional support and advocacy service which support young people bereaved by Homicide. All appointments take place in a confidential, secure and child friendly environment. A tailored support plan is created which is made up of various interventions to best support children and young people on their journey. These interventions may focus on several aspects of an individual's life such as: Physical Health, Relationships, Safety, Feelings and Behaviour, Education and Learning and many more. The length of the service is for 3 months unless further support is required.

Young People can access support at any point during their journey.

What does our one to one work include?

- Safety Planning
- Emotional Support
- Advocacy
- Practical Support
- Allocation of helpful resources
- Support through the Criminal Justice System (CJS) if applicable.
- Needs and Risk Assessments
- Signposting and referrals into agreed support services
- Commissioning of additional services on a case by case basis

Parents and carers

Once we have accepted the referral, we will arrange an initial conversation with the parent or carer to introduce ourselves and our services. We offer a free, confidential and independent service for young people. The parent/carer will be informed about all communication we have with other agencies relating to their family, which will only take place in the interest of supporting their child and with their consent. Alongside this, the service aims to engage parents in the support of the child with updates on advocacy and provision of resources where needed.

Working Definitions for Trauma

Some events can be upsetting or stressful for children and young people, which may lead to short-term changes in how, they feel, think and behave. Usually after the event has occurred, such reactions diminish and they return to how they felt, thought and behaved before the event(s). However, if someone is *traumatised* by an event, it overwhelms their ability to cope and their reactions seem to last well after the event has passed.

David Trickey, Consultant Clinical Psychologist at the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families.

Bessel van der Kolk (2014) adds that;

“Trauma is much more than a story about the past that explains why people are frightened, angry or out of control. Trauma is re-experienced in the present, not as a story, but as profoundly disturbing physical sensations and emotions that may not be consciously associated with memories of past trauma. Terror, rage and helplessness are manifested as bodily reactions, like a pounding heart, nausea, gut-wrenching sensations and characteristic body movements that signify collapse, rigidity or rage...”

The challenge in recovering from trauma is to learn to tolerate feeling what you feel and knowing what you know without becoming overwhelmed. There are many ways to achieve this, but all involve establishing a sense of safety and the regulation of physiological arousal.

How to contact us

If you require support for a young person bereaved or witness to murder or manslaughter or you would like further information please contact the team as below:

CYP Homicide email address – CYPHomicideService@VictimSupport.org.uk

Daniel Lawless - Children and Young Peoples Homicide Manager

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