



## Bereavement: Puddle jumping

Young people, more so than adults, can swing very quickly between grieving and getting on with their normal lives. In fact, children often jump in and out of their grief. We call this 'puddle jumping'.

Young people, particularly younger children, may 'jump' from feeling very upset and distressed one moment, to wanting to know what's for tea or whether they can play football, the next.

The puddle is their feelings of grief, and they can move very quickly and seamlessly in and out of that puddle, between real sadness and their normal activities.

Younger children tend to grieve in 'spurts' because they can often find it hard to tolerate grief for long periods of time. It can be confusing for adults too, as the child can be extremely upset one moment, and then apparently happy the next.

This lack of prolonged sadness may lead adults to falsely believe that children are unaffected by death. However, this 'puddle-jumping' in and out of grief type of behaviour is an inbuilt safety mechanism that stops them from becoming overwhelmed by powerful feelings.