

Children and Bereavement by Dr. Ann Rowland

Figures from the AALPHI study show bereavement is a major issue for young people; 36% of HIV infected children and 24% of HIV uninfected children (of infected parents) have experienced the death of one/both parents.

Bereavement impacts four areas; physical health, emotional responses, behavioural responses and achievement. Reactions will vary according to circumstances of death, relationship to the person, individual factors (developmental age, personality) and support environment

Grief is not a linear process and children often oscillate between loss oriented and restoration oriented mourning.

There is overlap when talking to children about 'HIV infection' and 'bereavement'. A good approach is:

- Honest and timely information in developmentally appropriate language
- Allow space to ask questions
- As the child develops there may be new questions/need for different information

Review by Sumaria Kavita (LNWUHC NHS T)