

What are the most effective interventions to support children and young people bereaved by suicide in the family?

RR0007 (September 2023)



3 studies identified

- 2 Uncontrolled pre-post studies
- 1 non-randomised controlled study



All 3 studies reported on group therapy interventions (lasting between 10- 14 weeks).

All three studies covered mental health outcomes.



Children aged between 6 → 15



Sample size between 5 and 75 children



The generalisability of the results is limited due to the small sample sizes and study designs.



Studies conducted in Canada, the United States of America and Ireland.



Aim : To access the evidence of the effectiveness of interventions to support children and young people up to the age of 24 years.

This review was requested to inform Welsh Government's suicide and self-harm prevention strategy. Children and young people who lost loved ones to suicide are more likely to suffer a complicated bereavement process and have poor mental health.



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government



Key findings and certainty of the evidence

- Reduction in anxiety and depression symptoms found in those who recieved group interventions.
- Strongest evidence from non-randomised controlled study, in which children in the intervention group had signification reductions in symptoms compared to the control group.
- Some behavioural and social outcomes such as anger and distruprtion were also measured but due to small sample size and lack of control groups this was inconclusive.

Research Implications and Evidence Gaps

Further research is needed to develop interventions to support children and young people bereaved through death by suicide of a family member. Additional research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of planned interventions.

Policy and Practice Implication

It's difficult to draw conclusions due to the limited evidence and low quality of included studies. There are indications that group interventions may help to reduce anxiety and depression symptoms. It is important to develop guidance and standards of practice for these services based on the best evidence available.