



IRISH FA SAFE SPORT GUIDANCE

Bereavement Support

Grief caused by bereavement is an unavoidable part of our lives, but few of us feel appropriately prepared to support others through the experience...

This can be particularly true at club level in grassroots football, where we may only interact with players for short periods of time.

This guidance is intended to provide basic signposting and advice when supporting individuals who are experiencing the effects of bereavement, and can be applied to both adults and young people within grassroots clubs.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SIGNPOSTING

The first port of call for any individual experiencing prolonged effects of grief and bereavement should be referral to their GP.

Voluntary organisations in local areas are equally well placed to provide support, particularly if circumstances surrounding bereavement are specific to a geographical area.

The Irish FA can also act as a source of support through our Safeguarding Team, in addition to seeking help from Club Support Officers in the Irish FA Foundation.

In addition, the Safe Sport Guidance document 'The Physical and Behavioural indicators of Grief in a Coaching Context' is available on the Safeguarding section of the Irish FA website.

USEFUL LINKS

The Irish FA has worked with a number of statutory, voluntary and private organisations to provide bereavement advice and support to youth football clubs. This has included, but is not limited to:

- **Health and Social Care Trust Bereavement Network:** www.bereaved.hscni.net
- **The Impact Network:** laura@impactnetworkni.org / info@impactnetworkni.org
- **Barnardo's Child Bereavement Service:** cbsreferrals@barnardos.org.uk
- **PIPs Suicide Prevention:** www.pipscharity.com
- **TAMHI:** www.tamhi.org
- **Bereaved by Suicide Support Service:** BBSService@northerntrust.hscni.net

ADVICE FROM IRISH FA STAFF

Irish FA staff recently undertook training with the Impact Network to help them navigate 'The Immediate Aftermath' of bereavement for our Elite Pathway players, and had the following advice to share with grassroots coaches:

"Create space for honest conversations without putting pressure on the individual. In football environments we can sometimes be very schedule-driven, so giving a bereaved player or coach the chance to tell you what they feel able to manage – and what support they'd prefer – can make a huge difference." **Gail Redmond, Women's Under 19 Manager**

"You don't need perfect words. Showing care, patience and consistency can make a huge difference." **Alan Simpson, Women's U16 Goalkeeper Coach**

"Communicate directly, be an active listener and don't over promise." **Stephen Erskine, Club Development Officer**

"Get young people back to training and around their friends, and make the family aware of support options both within football and through external agencies." **Elaine Roden, Women's Welfare Officer**