



About FirstLight...

The sudden loss of a child is one of the most unimaginable pains a family can experience. Every year in Ireland, children die suddenly, unexpectedly and often without explanation. Since 1976, FirstLight has supported families through their darkest moments, helping them find the first flicker of hope...their FirstLight!

National
24-Hour Helpline
1800 391 391
—  —

FirstLight

Supporting Suddenly Bereaved Parents & Families

FirstLight Supports

FirstLight offers free professional support and provides information to families in Ireland that have experienced the sudden, unexpected death of their child if aged from 0 to 18 years.

A person's normal coping mechanisms are often disrupted by the sudden death of a child. The intensity of emotion can be overwhelming, affecting a person cognitively, physically and behaviourally. Disruption in sleep can fray one's ability to cope, making everyday tasks difficult. Some people experience flashback and intrusive thoughts and images. Feeling lost, hopeless, numb or distressed can be very frightening.

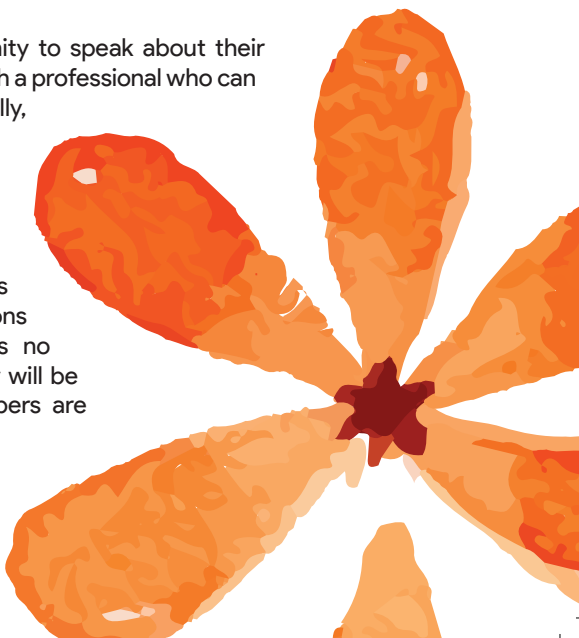
FirstLight is a trauma-informed organisation, offering a National 24-hour Helpline service, Crisis Intervention and Psychotherapy service. Our services are provided nationwide by our team of professionally accredited, fully insured and Garda vetted psychotherapists and counsellors. Our team members are professionally trained to provide support to clients experiencing trauma associated with the sudden death of their child. All of our services to families are free of charge and confidential.

Home Visits

As soon as FirstLight receives a referral, and provided the permission of the family is agreed, contact will be made with the family to arrange a home visit. Home visits are provided to bereaved parents, usually in the comfort and privacy of their own home. The visit is undertaken by a professionally trained psychotherapist who is also trained in Critical Incident Stress Management.

The home visit gives parents an opportunity to speak about their child's death and share their experience with a professional who can create a safe, contained environment. Usually, reactions that are causing fear and distress are normalised, and parents can ask any questions they may have about the grieving process.

They will be informed of the services provided by FirstLight and the support options available to meet their needs. There is no obligation to use FirstLight's services; they will be made available if and when family members are ready to engage in them.





Couple Therapy

Although the grief being experienced will feel the same, how each individual processes and copes with it will differ. Some couples wish to go to therapy together to have a safe space to talk about their experience of their child's death. Couple therapy offers couples a contained and safe space to explore together the impact of their child's death on each other and on their relationship; it facilitates exploration of ways to understand and support each other through their individual grief, and what each individual needs within the relationship to help the healing process.

Individual Psychotherapy

When a child dies suddenly, the grief can feel very lonely, and it can feel like no one understands. The emptiness can feel unbearable. There is often a fear of burdening others or a fear of making them upset. Yet, the pain of the sudden death of a child can feel too heavy to carry alone. It can be challenging to explore and process and feel this grief alone because it can often feel relentless. Disturbed sleep and longing to see and be with your child again, can make you feel like you are teetering on the edge. Feelings of panic and dread can be debilitating. All of these feelings are normal for the type of grief you are experiencing.

Psychotherapy offers a safe, supportive space to explore your grief and to process it, making it easier to make sense of how you are feeling and what you are experiencing. The fear of the intensity of the pain is reduced when it is held and witnessed by another. It is often challenging to self-regulate emotionally when the body and mind are suffering. Psychotherapy offers a regulating space which builds the resilience to work through this unique grief.

Therapy Platforms

FirstLight offers individual and couple therapy face to face, online, or over the phone.

Play Therapy

Sibling loss invokes a unique kind of grief. The impact on the surviving child will be different, depending on their developmental stage. The pain the child feels will be intense and will usually not make sense and be confusing. Children will build their defences around how they make sense of the death of their sibling and fit it into their narrative in a way in which they can cope with it. This process is natural and essential for the child to survive the trauma. The sibling's world has changed, and this can bring with it fears, self-blame, intrusive thoughts or thoughts that make meaning and sense of what happened even if not related to what actually happened. Anger, frustration and pain can be hard for the child to manage. Also, the longing for their sibling can feel very strong.

A parent's instinct is to help their child and get them help before they get help for themselves. The truth is that children don't exist in isolation, like adults, and they need their family to function to feel safe. It is important that parents look after their own emotional wellbeing first, in this case, to facilitate their child's grieving process. As children look to their parents for permission to grieve, through a parent's grieving process, a parent teaches their child how to grieve.

Play therapy is a service provided by FirstLight and is usually not offered within the first 6 months following the bereavement. When a child is referred for therapy, it is important that at least one parent has attended therapy themselves beforehand. This will make the process for the child and parent easier.

An exception to this approach is considered in instances where a child is extremely distressed or suffering in a way that requires an earlier intervention.





Facebook Peer Support Groups

FirstLight's online peer support groups are closed private groups providing the opportunity for bereaved mothers and fathers to connect with other mothers and fathers who are also grieving. These groups are monitored by an administrator and are a safe place for bereaved parents to share their stories, seek support from others and connect in their shared pain.

National 24-Hour Helpline 1800 391 391

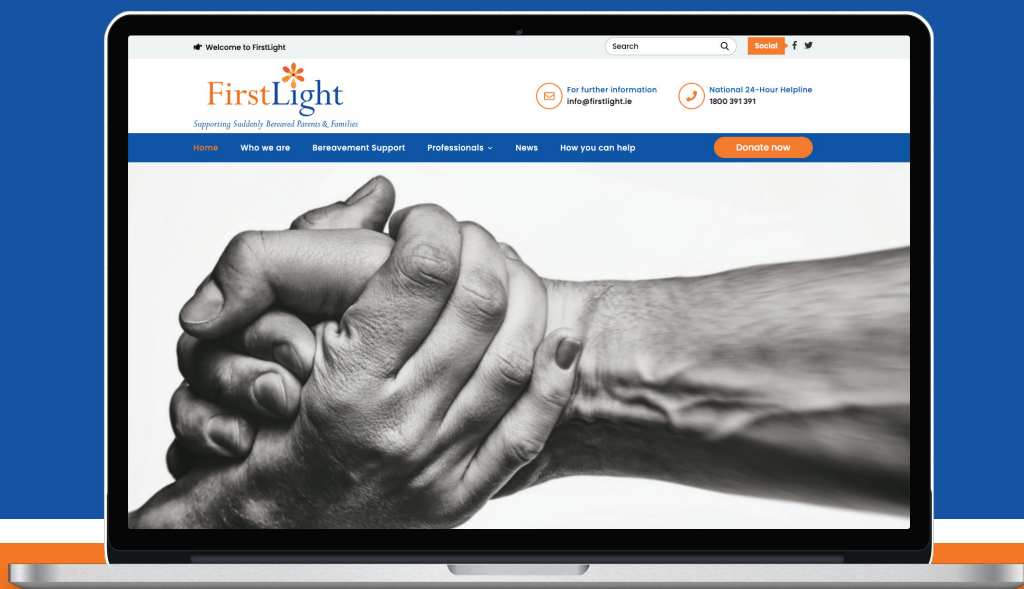
FirstLight provides an empathic, compassionate, friendly service by fully qualified psychotherapists, via its National 24-Hour Helpline, 1800 391 391.

It is a safe place to call and share your story.

The service supports callers in crisis; provides information; provides psychoeducation related to a sudden bereavement; and responds to queries one might have on the death of a child or the services provided by FirstLight.

FirstLight's Website

FirstLight's website includes up to date information on the organisation's services and history. It provides links to useful information, and a means to contact FirstLight via its video counselling facility, Tawk. to. The video counselling facility enables FirstLight's team of counsellors and psychotherapists to meet virtually with bereaved family members, provide counselling and psychotherapy sessions, chat with clients about their concerns, and respond to questions. These services are provided in a secure, safe and virtual space and clients can avail of these services from the comfort of their own homes. Like FirstLight's Face to Face services, these online services are provided free of charge.



How to Contact FirstLight

Contact can be made with the FirstLight team by frontline professionals, family members, or concerned friends or relatives. This can be done by phone (1800 391 391), by email (info@firstlight.ie), through the FirstLight Facebook Page messenger or by post (FirstLight, Carmichael Centre, 4 North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7, D07 RHA8). While not essential, it is helpful if contact is accompanied by a completed Referral Form, available for download from FirstLight's website, www.firstlight.ie

1800 391 391 - info@firstlight.ie - www.firstlight.ie



Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Debriefing Service

A number of FirstLight's therapists have additional training in Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM). A CISM Debriefing service is available in the aftermath of a critical incident involving the sudden death of a child or children, within a school, crèche, club, or for any blue light organisation involved in the incident that requires an autonomous outsourced intervention.

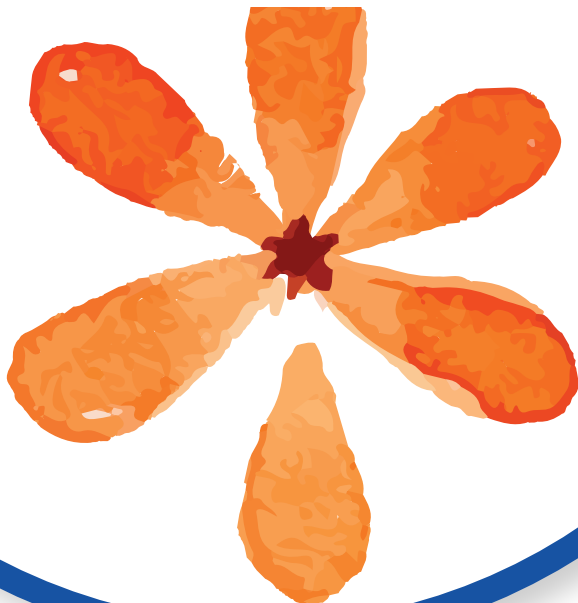
FirstLight will make available onsite two CISM certified psychotherapists to provide:

- * Individual crisis intervention
- * Onsite triage
- * Defusing services
- * Crisis management briefings
- * Debriefing services, and
- * Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) services.

For further information about FirstLight's CISM Debriefing service and costs, please contact FirstLight's Clinical Director on 1800 391 391.

FirstLight is a Member of Critical Incident Stress Management Network Ireland





*Through the support I received I can look
forward to living again, something I never thought
I could do*

FirstLight

Supporting Suddenly Bereaved Parents & Families

FirstLight

Carmichael Ireland

4 North Brunswick Street, Dublin 7 D07 RHA8

Email: info@firstlight.ie

Head Office: 01-8732711

National 24-Hour Helpline

1800 391 391

www.firstlight.ie



The Community
Foundation for Ireland

