

**Department of Sociological Studies.**

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**Invitation to Participate: Research into experiences of parenting practices following the death of a sibling**

Dear [name],

Back in 2017 we spoke about your experiences of being a bereaved sibling as part of my PhD research. I’m writing to ask whether you will take part in a follow up interview which aims to explore how siblings are parented following the death of a brother or sister.

Throughout the PhD it was clear that the relationship between surviving siblings and their parent/s is integral to the way that individuals experience their bereavement over the life course. I would therefore like to ask you more about this specific aspect of your experience. I’m planning to use these initial interviews to apply for some funding to conduct the study on a much larger scale, with the eventual aim of writing a book about sibling bereavement.

I’ve included with this letter an information sheet about the study, outlining the project and what it would mean to take part. Hopefully it will answer any questions that you may have but if you do have any queries or concerns then please feel free to contact me using the details provided.

If you would prefer to not take part, for whatever reason, that is entirely your choice. However, if you feel that you would like to be involved then it would be great to hear from you. Either way, I’d like to thank you for taking the time to read this letter and the enclosed information.

Many thanks and best wishes,

Laura

**Parenting Practices Following a Sibling Bereavement**

**Participant Information Sheet**

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. Feel free to discuss it with others, including myself and my line manager, if you are unsure or have any concerns.

**What is the research about?**

The aim of the research is to learn more about how siblings are parented (in both the short and long term) following the death of a brother or sister. Possible questions might include ‘how would you describe your relationship with your parent/s?’ or ‘how have their parenting practices changed over time?’

**Who is carrying out the research?**

Each aspect of the research will be done by myself. I am a Research Fellow at the University of Sheffield, funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to carry out this project under the mentorship of Professor Kate Reed. It has been approved by the Department of Sociological Studies at the University of Sheffield, as well as the University’s Ethics Committee.

**Why is it being done?**

It soon became clear during the PhD that the relationship between living siblings and their parent/s is integral to the way that people understand and experience their bereavement. I am therefore submitting a bid for funding to conduct a much larger research project that will focus on this relationship as it changes over time. The information gathered during our interview will be used to shape and inform the funding bid, with the hope that it will have a greater chance of success.

**Who is taking part?**

I am approaching a small number of people who took part in the PhD research and expressed an interest in any future work stemming from that.

**Do I have to take part?**

Absolutely not, it is entirely your choice! If you read this information sheet and decide that it is not for you then you are under no obligation to take part. I will not contact you to ask for an answer or an explanation of your decision.

**What will I have to do if I decide to take part?**

We will have an informal interview much like we did before, where I will ask some questions and you will be invited to answer those you feel comfortable discussing. Due to the current restrictions, we will speak online or by phone, and I will record our conversation with your permission. I anticipate the interview will last approximately 1 hour.

**Are there any potential downsides to me taking part?**

As before, I am aware that some aspects of our discussion may be difficult for you to talk about. If you do get upset during our conversation then you are not expected to carry on and we can change the subject, take a break or stop the interview. Of course, we can also continue if you feel able and willing to do so – it will be entirely your choice.

**What will be done with the information that I provide?**

Please be assured that your participation in this research will remain confidential and I will not disclose to anyone any identifying details about who is taking part. Anything that we discuss will be audio recorded to ensure accuracy when writing up the research but this will be encrypted straight after the interview so nobody can access it apart from myself. I will then write this up, word for word, but change any identifiable features, such as names, specific dates or locations to make recognition difficult, although specific details may make you identifiable by people familiar with your personal history. I will store this on my laptop under password protection that once again only I will be able to access. Any personal contact details will be destroyed 5 years after the date of interview but anonymous interview write ups will be retained by myself after this time period.

**What can I do if I am unhappy about something?**

Hopefully this won’t be the case and is very unlikely! However, if you have any concerns or problems, then please do raise them with me so that I can try to address them. If you are not happy with my response, then you can contact my mentor, Professor Kate Reed. If at any stage you wish to withdraw from the study, then that is absolutely fine and you will not be asked to give a reason. If you decide that you would like some additional support, I am in contact with some bereavement charities in the South Yorkshire area who are aware of my study and happy to help anyone in need of a confidential chat or advice. Anything you said to them would be confidential and not linked to me or this research project in any way.

**What are the next steps?**

If you have read this information and decided to not take part in the study, then there is nothing for you to do. If you are interested in any way, then please contact me using the details provided on page 1.

**For your information, here are my mentor’s contact details:**

Professor Kate Reed

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**Once again, many thanks for reading and please do not hesitate to ask questions.**