

## My involvement with dads.care Dave, 2020



My son Ben died in December 2018 after spending 13 months continually in hospital in Oxford and Bristol. He lost the battle with Leukaemia after a very difficult time with prolonged treatment and after 13 months away we sadly returned home without him.

I had plenty of time in hospital to consider the future and one thing I was certain of was that I needed help. I knew that some help would come from family and friends but I wanted the space to be able to discuss my grieving with either an individual or a group who didn't know me.

I was recommended the Dads group so decided to try a session about 3 months after losing Ben with the view that if I didn't feel comfortable there was no need to go again.

I immediately felt a connection with the group and although our children's circumstances were very different we had all ultimately ended up in the same position. Knowing that I was not alone with my suffering and hearing others talking about their experiences was comforting. The group has the ability to give everyone space and enough time to talk if you wish. Sometimes I feel alright about joining in the conversation and other times I like to sit quietly and listen and reflect, either way is ok and you never feel that you have to get involved. On occasions I really open up as I know confidentiality and respect is a core value.

I still have a slightly nervous feeling several days before the meeting but there is also an overwhelming feeling to attend. I wouldn't say that I look forward to the meeting as I always know that I would obviously prefer to not be in this position. Although the meeting is very relaxed it must be intense without realising it and I know that when I got home I am drained of energy. I often spend the next few days or weeks reflecting on other Dads stories or my own accounts that I shared with the group.

There may come a time when I decide that I no longer need to attend but this is not at the moment so I may see you at a meeting in the future.

**Visit [dads.care](https://dads.care) for more Dads' Stories and information about our group**