

# PARENTS, CAREGIVERS AND GUARDIANS

## How to support children and young people with CBS

**Believe what you are told** – When a child tells you about their hallucinations, it's their way of reaching out for help and understanding. Dismissing or downplaying what they say can make them feel isolated, embarrassed or even afraid to share in future.

**Respond to distressing hallucinations** – Remain calm and offer comfort. Encourage them to try the coping strategies for managing CBS, which can be found on Esme's Umbrella's website – [www.charlesbonnetsyndrome.uk](http://www.charlesbonnetsyndrome.uk)

**Provide reassurance** – Explain that the hallucinations are a normal response to vision loss and not a sign of mental illness. Reassure them that what they see is not real and cannot physically harm them.

**Explain the condition** – Using simple language they can understand, help the child to understand that CBS happens because the brain is trying to fill in gaps caused by reduced eyesight.

**Educate siblings and peers** - the child must not feel isolated or misunderstood. So it is important that more people understand CBS and can support the child.

**Encourage open conversations** – Children and young people may feel confused, scared or embarrassed by their hallucinations. Encourage them to talk about what they are seeing and feeling. Regularly check in with them, and reassure them that it's okay to discuss their experiences without judgement.

**Identify triggers** – Some people experience CBS more when they are in low light, tired, or under stimulated. Try to reduce these triggers by ensuring good lighting and encouraging engaging activities. Create a routine and provide distractions like reading, singing, or puzzles to shift focus. Feeling isolated, stressed or feverish will also exacerbate CBS.

**Consult an eye specialist** – If the hallucinations become frequent and particularly distressing, consult an eye care professional for further advice. Eye specialists can provide more insight into managing CBS and ensure the child's vision care is optimised.

**Talk to one of the sight charities for children and young people.** Each organisation will have a CBS Champion who can give advice and support.



This is **Em**, our friendly CBS monster, who can give information to the children and young people via booklets and an animated film, which can be accessed by this QR code,





# TEACHERS

## How can teachers help?

**Be patient and understanding** – Recognise that the student may become distracted or confused during hallucinations. Allow time for them to refocus.

**Create a supportive environment** – Encourage the student to share their experiences privately if they feel comfortable. Establish a private signal the child can use if they need a break or are feeling overwhelmed. Having a CBS point of contact at the school can provide reassurance.

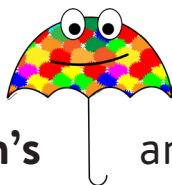
**Encourage peer understanding** – Without singling the child out, foster a classroom culture of empathy and support so that all students feel safe and included.

**Work with parents and specialists** – Maintain regular communication with the child's parents about their experiences with CBS at school. Collaborate with eye care professionals or special education teams to ensure the child receives any necessary accommodations.



**Em's** information booklet is useful for children and young people.

Contact Judith at Esme's Umbrella for a copy – [\*\*judith@charlesbonnetsyndrome.uk\*\*](mailto:judith@charlesbonnetsyndrome.uk)



Use this QR code to access **Em's** animated film about CBS or use Em's Information booklet.



If you would like to become a Member of Esme's Umbrella and receive a regular update on the work of the charity and CBS research, please email [\*\*luke@charlesbonnetsyndrome.uk\*\*](mailto:luke@charlesbonnetsyndrome.uk)

**For more information about CBS -  
[\*\*www.charlesbonnetsyndrome.uk\*\*](http://www.charlesbonnetsyndrome.uk)**