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## A Mother's Perspective: 'River and Sea Sense'

Debbie Anne Turnbull  
*River and Sea Sense (RASS) (UK)*

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A Mother's Perspective: 'River and Sea Sense'  
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On August 14th 2006 Debbie Anne Turnbull lost her son Christopher to drowning in open water in North Wales. [www.riverandseasense.com](http://www.riverandseasense.com) and [www.watersafetymap.co.uk](http://www.watersafetymap.co.uk)

Debbie's presentation was made from a parent's perspective about the mental and physical effect loss of a child has. Over the last 12 years Debbie had educated herself and learned from Emergency and Rescue Services about the different aspects of drowning. She also met and spoke to experienced water safety experts with the intent of understanding how we educate young people to ascertain what makes them retain information that could save their lives or others in the future. Debbie has been considered a pioneer in how parents who have lost a child to drowning have made a difference in educating and making a difference in open water safety and education.

RASS River And Sea Sense Ltd was set up as a result of the drowning of Christopher Turnbull age 15 in North Wales. Debbie Turnbull traveled across Wales and UK providing educational assemblies and lessons/workshops to young people in schools from ages 8 to 18 and to date has addressed 300.000 children. If there is an opening in any lesson whether it be geography, English, PSE, or IT, Debbie has found a way to spend that lesson with pupils. Debbie has gained UK and international recognition for her work. Amongst her many awards, Debbie has received the National Lottery Special Achievement Award in 2017 presented by Bear Grylls. Debbie has put on events and regularly speaks at business conferences across Wales and UK. ROSPA drowning figures 12 years ago were six years out-of-date when Debbie decided to create the Water Safety Map which, with further funding, will help tell the stories of how people lost their lives as well as those about near-miss incidents which Debbie feels are as important when ascertaining what can be done to educate and save more lives. This addition to her water safety mapping project has gained much interest and will be at the forefront of Debbie's work for 2019.

In addition to her work in drowning prevention, Debbie has a passion about the lack of support following drowning incidents but anywhere a child has died. Her research has highlighted that a huge unspoken problem regarding PTSD exists within some of our Emergency Services that in many cases where a loss of life has occurred may affect a rescuer for the rest of their lives. Debbie hopes to establish a new project dealing with PTSD for 2019.

Debbie has an extensive background in sales, training and motivational speaking. She has trained as an NLP Master and uses a wealth of alternative therapies finding the use of language and visualisation key to her successful delivery.

*"We Think You Are Amazing" Bear Grylls*



Her relationship with the UK Press and TV has grown and Debbie is proud to have their support when certain issues need to be brought to public attention such as recently highlighting the danger of use of inflatables in a story in the Daily Mirror. Her recent fourth visit to UK Parliament enabled her to address the oft unrecognised dangers of open water. Debbie speaks from the heart - needs no presentation aids and delivers every time. Debbie Turnbull set up a charity called River and Sea Sense (RASS) in response to the tragic death of her 15-year-old son, Christopher, who drowned on 14th August 2006. RASS has educated over 200.000 young persons and adults across North Wales and beyond as to the dangers of open water.