



**St Teresa's
Hospice**
Giving to life

Registered Charity 518394

A positive approach to loss & grief



Hello and welcome to our third e-bulletin for schools.

Back in 2020, in response to the increasing demand on schools and social care teams to support families with the impact of bereavement during the Covid-19 pandemic, the hospice and the local council began a conversation about developing a comprehensive training programme. Our shared aim was to enable real and lasting improvement in bereavement support for children and young people in the town. The resulting "A Positive Approach" programme grew out of the hospice's experience of accompanying children, young people and families on their journeys through loss and grief.

As a team we have always held a relational focus to practice, which places the individual at the heart of the support and enables children to understand, manage and grow from their experience of loss. The bespoke, training package we produced was also designed to build upon the considerable knowledge and skills of local

practitioners and enable you to fully implement and embed new learning, not only within your own practice, but to achieve lasting change in your school or team.

As the programme comes to an end, we wish to thank everyone who has already submitted feedback in the form of a reflection, audit and questionnaire. As well as giving us valuable evidence to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme, we hope this has enabled you to recognise the incredible journey you have been on and the hard work you have put into this course. As you may be aware, we have enlisted the help of a specialist academic to evaluate the programme and assess its impact so we can discern how to move forward with this vital work. In the meantime, we have been moved and encouraged by your testimonies about the amazing work you are doing. We hope to see you in September when we should be able to share the outcome of the evaluation. In the meantime have a wonderful summer and some well-deserved rest.

Deborah Robinson and Ben Bourne

The Northern Echo Health & Care Awards

In April, we were delighted to find out that St Teresa's Hospice had been nominated in the Northern Echo Health and Care Awards 2022 in two categories including the Palliative Care award and Care Training of the Year award.

The awards were to honour those in the care sector who have risen to the challenges presented by the coronavirus crisis and gone above and beyond their duty to help others. Nominations come from the public and we were very touched to have received these.

We attended the virtual award ceremony and won the Care Training Award! This award was for outstanding work in care training, and recognised this course which we have been running. Our Bereavement Team won high praise for this training which has given education professionals the tools to tackle grief in their school communities.

Thanks once again to anyone who voted for us and took part in the course to make it such a success!

[Watch the awards](#)

If you want to you can catch up and watch the awards on their Youtube channel at www.youtube.com/watch?v=jyemzWdfV9E





Make your own Dream Catcher

When children are bereaved, they can start to get anxious about leaving their parent, or main carer because they fear this person may die too.

This can be a particular problem at night if the child starts to refuse to go to bed because they don't want to be left alone, or are scared of the dreams they may have.

It is important to listen to the child's fears and find ways of reassuring them that it is OK to go to bed. One way you could do this is by making a dream catcher with the child that can be hung in their window or above their bed. Whilst you make the dream catcher with them, you can talk of things they remember about the deceased person, like their favourite colour, or particular items they liked. If possible you can even incorporate these features into the design.

Making a dream catcher whilst talking about their memories can be comforting for the child and may help them to settle back in their bed again.

What you need:

- A paper plate
- Wool or ribbon
- Beads or feathers
- Any other decorations

Making a Paper Plate Dream Catcher



Step 1:

Get a paper plate and fold it in half. Cut out the central circle, leaving only the outer rim.

Step 2:

Punch three holes along the outer edge of the ring. Punch one hole directly opposite the central hole on the opposite side of the ring. Punch six further holes around the inner rim of the ring.

Step 3:

Cut three pieces of wool or ribbon which can be tied through the three lower holes. These can have beads, feathers or other items attached to them that link with memories of the deceased person.

Step 4:

Take a long piece of wool and thread it through the holes around the edge. Going across the gap in different diagonals to create a web-like appearance. Secure the wool at the back of the ring by tying it to another section of wool.

Step 5:

Tie a final piece of wool to the top hole so that it can be hung in the bedroom.

Step 6:

Decorate the ring or web with items that bring back good memories.



Coping at school when someone special has died

When children and young people have experienced a death in the family, or that of a close friend, their feelings and emotions around this can make school feel like a very different environment. Here are some ideas staff members could use which can encourage them to plan and manage their school day and identify a support network to help them until they feel stronger and more able to cope.

Coping passport

It can be very lonely if you're feeling sad or upset about someone you love who has died. Sometimes it isn't easy to talk to your friends, especially if they're busy with other things or their worries are very different to yours.

Having a person you can trust in school who knows what is happening in your life and who can understand you when you have difficult days is really important. It could be your teacher or another adult in the school who knows you, like a teaching assistant, or member of the lunchtime staff. You might like to talk to a teacher you've had in the past who you get on well with.

At lunchtime or during breaks perhaps it would help to arrange a quiet place in the school, or outside in the playground, where you can go to, maybe with a friend, when things get too much for you. Speak to your teacher to see if this is possible.

School grounds or playgrounds can be busy and loud places. If it all gets too much perhaps you can take a book or magazine you enjoy reading into school or ask if you can sit in the library where it's quieter.

If you're struggling to come to school because of how you're feeling speak to someone in your family. Ask them to explain this to your teacher so that they can make arrangements to help you feel safe and have some quiet time if you need it.

Having a plan to help you when things get too much is a good idea. You could make a passport booklet with information in so that if you get upset people know what they can do to help. Perhaps someone in your family or a member of school staff could help you with this.

This could say your name, why things are difficult for you, who your trusted people are in the school, where your safe places are and anything else to help people care for you. You could even colour or decorate your booklet to personalise it.

People will understand if you get upset or struggle at school and having a plan to help will give you confidence to cope with these times until you are feeling stronger.



"Blob Loss" Pip Wilson and Ian Long 2018 Loggerhead Publishing Ltd.

The Wellness Hub Resources



We continuously work hard to update our virtual resource centre of information that you can access digitally - The Wellness Hub.

The Wellness Hub is a resource for staff, patients and professionals where we share information, videos and useful links.

- You can access the Hub by visiting www.wellnesshub.life and then registering for an account. You'll then be asked to fill out our short form.
- If you have any problems you can find help on our FAQ page wellnesshub.life/faqs or you can email enquiries@darlingtonhospice.org.uk.
- Once you've registered, we will approve your account and you'll receive an email letting you know that you can now access all the information in the Hub.
- Then, explore the Wellness Hub as much as you want!
- All of the Schools resources, including our worksheets (below) can be found in the 'Learn' Section, and you can see a flavour of what we have to offer below.
- We hope you find this helpful!

St Teresa's Hospice
Breathing Techniques for
T: 01325 254 321 | E: enquiries@darlingtonhospice.org.uk

Blowing Bubbles

Use a pot of bubbles with a plastic wand.
Take a normal breath and blow air through the hoop, making a stream of bubbles.
If you blow really hard your bubbles may burst but if you breathe out gently you can see your body. This will help you to become aware of something that you would normally not notice.
If you ever become upset or anxious, your pattern of breathing can become irregular. Remember to think of breathing out as if you're blowing bubbles. Picture this in your mind and it can help you to breathe more evenly and calmly.

Bubbly Breathing

Put a couple of coins of water in a plastic cup.
Take a big breath and then, using a straw, to blow bubbles with the air in your lungs. Notice how much air you can hold in your lungs.
Now breathe in through your nose - so that you don't drink the water! - and then your head count to three as you breathe in and three as you breathe out, making great big breaths.
This will help you to practice a natural and healthy pattern of breathing.

Using books in Bereavement Support

A book can be used to convey a gentle message through its narrative, or help a child or young person understand aspects of bereavement that are difficult to grasp. They can also provide explanations about new and often frightening situations.

Reading a book together can support a child/young person with the thoughts and feelings they are experiencing and help them to recognise that other people feel the same way. By creating conversations around death and loss you can support them if they are confused or have misunderstandings about their experience and reduce any unknowns they have around grief.

It is important to read the book with a child/young person at their pace, having conversations about the issues and thoughts that arise from the content as you go. Allow time to explore how they feel about what they read and what it evokes for them. Once you've finished the book, encourage the child/young person to discuss what they thought about the story and if there is anything they didn't understand or need further reassurance about.

Final Note:

A child/young person may become upset as you work, but providing reassurance that their thoughts and feelings are perfectly understandable, and acknowledging and reducing their worries, should allow them to work through their emotions and feel the benefit of talking about things with someone they can trust.

Breathing exercises can be a useful way to support a child/young person to calm down. Also they may find it useful to have a fidget toy or piece of modelling clay/dough to handle if they feel uncomfortable, particularly at first.

At the end of the session, always check with the child/young person they feel okay to return to class or make arrangements for them to have some quiet time before they engage with school activities again.

Last but not least, remember your own needs and take care of yourself!

Guide - Making a Memory Box (Ages 5-10)

Put a memory box in that the child can put anything that reminds them of their loved one. This could be a letter, a piece of jewellery, a photo of a time they shared with you used to laugh at together written on a piece of paper.

Step 1. Choosing a box:

Deciding what box to use and decorating it are a key part of this activity. The child can use a memory box especially made for the activity which may have a panel where they might put in to put their own name, or the name of the person they are remembering. Designing and decorating the card for this can be the first stage eg. "My Box About Grandpa", "Mum's Memory Box", "Mum's Special Things". Or they might prefer to use a plain box - this is a choice box which they can decorate.

Step 2. Items to decorate the box with:

Photographs of the special person or the child with them; CD/download of a special piece of music; Perfume or aftershave (this can be sprayed on a scarf, handkerchief or small soft toy); Christmas/birthday cards; letters or notes; postcards; an item of jewellery; shells, stones, feathers, stones; a small item of clothing (like a scarf, T-shirt or pair of gloves); memento pictures and cards they made for them; a small ornament; something that reminds them of the person's job; a joke they shared; something with their handwriting; tickets or programmes of things they did with them eg. cinema ticket, football programme; recording they have of their voice; a pair of glasses.

Step 3. Writing a letter:

They could write a letter of things they would like to tell the person who has died and their memories of them. This is useful if they are struggling to find physical things to put in their memory box.

Step 4. Final Note:

Encourage the child to think of things to collect at first and discussing some of the suggestions can help memories of the person. If they struggle to find items for the box you can help them as by suggesting they make cards for the person they are remembering, put in pictures from the internet of places they went with them or draw pictures of things they remember.

You may need to involve the family to help the child find items for the box or to make provision to bring the sentimental things to school and that they are transported safely in box at school, the child could take it home to fill with items and then they could go to have a conversation about the contents with you.

People may tell the child lists of new stories about their own memories of their special person's memory box will be their place to remember who they were and why they were special.

Example text: "I feel sad or angry I can look through all my mum's things in my memory box and they help me smile and remember her voice. They send the bad feelings packing."

A note from Julie

Hi everyone,

I would just like to take this opportunity to thank all of the candidates who managed to attend the supervision sessions.

Supervision is so important. It offers a safe space where you can come together to share and reflect on your practice. This not only enhances knowledge and skills to support your professional development and improve service delivery, but also enables you to feel more confident and reassures you that you are working ethically.

From the feedback we have received it is clear that the experience has been of real value to those who were able to participate. I would like to thank you all for being able to share and learn from each other and the supervision process.

I wish you all the best as you continue to do the amazing work within your organisations.

Best Wishes,
Julie





Useful Website Links

Here are some websites which may be useful. They provide information and emotional support for young people who are able to independently research around bereavement and loss.

The Wellness Support Hub

www.wellnesshub.life

Child Bereavement UK

Support for young people | Child Bereavement UK
www.childbereavementuk.org

Winston's Wish

www.winstonswish.org

Help 2 Make Sense

Support for grieving young people
help2makesense.org

Young Minds

How To Deal With Grief and Loss | Mental Health Advice | YoungMinds
www.youngminds.org.uk

Young Minds - General Mental Health Support

Mental Health Support For Young People | YoungMinds
Help With How I'm Feeling | Mental Health Advice | YoungMinds | YoungMinds
www.youngminds.org.uk

NHS

Bereavement and young people
www.nhs.uk

Youth website of Cruse Bereavement Care

www.hopeagain.org.uk

Childline

childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/feelings-emotions/when-someone-dies
www.childline.org.uk

Grief Encounter

www.griefencounter.org.uk