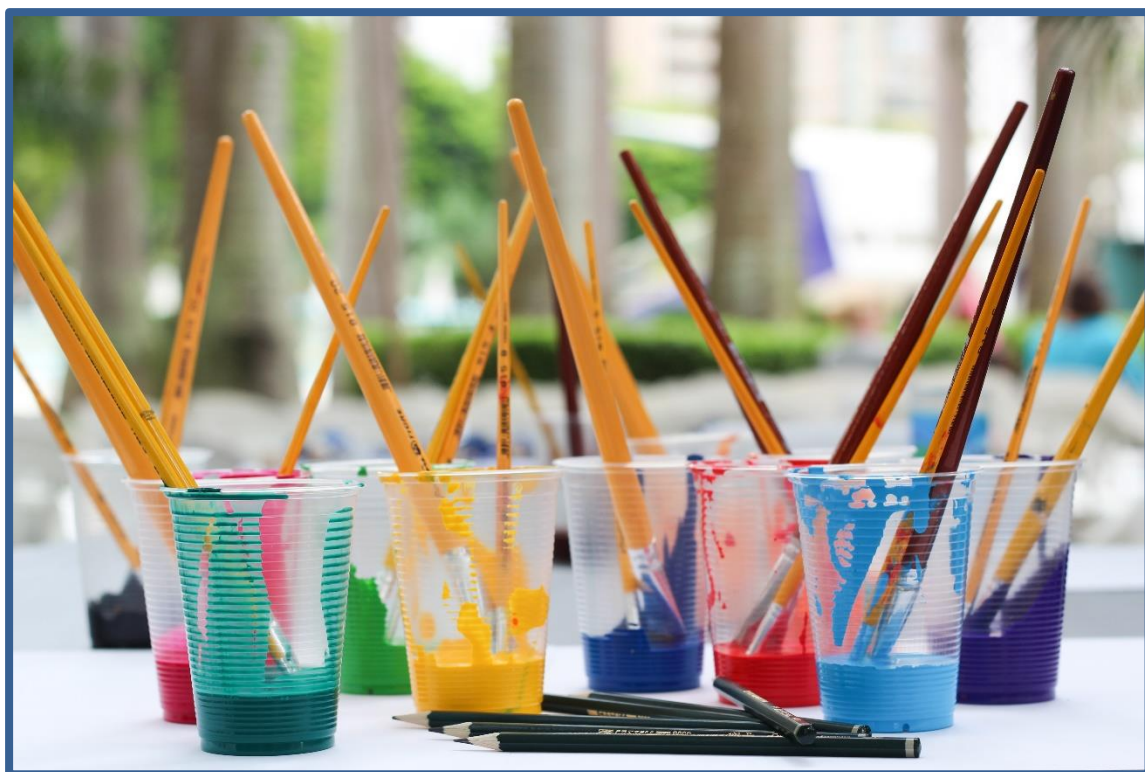




The Dove Service

Children & Young People's Resource Pack

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1) Introduction

We have put this resource pack together for all those who work with and support children and young people (C&YP).

Contained within this resource pack you will find information sheets on loss and grief; information specifically around loss and grief and the effects that this may have on children and young people; and some activities you can do with your child/young person.

These sheets are designed to help support C&YP and help them cope and come to terms with loss and bereavement. This can be a bewildering and emotional time in anyone's life. We hope that you find the information useful.

The section on loss and grief may help you to explore and understand the many feelings and thoughts which C&YP may experience when faced with loss and bereavement a little better.

The information on loss and grief could help you to find ways to support C&YP at a time of loss or bereavement and could enable you to offer effective support appropriate to their individual needs.

The pages of activity suggestions share some excellent ideas around ways to remember someone important, and to help you come to terms with your loss, as well as coping strategies, talking about emotions and grounding techniques.

There is a lot of additional information available through other organisations and activities that you can access online, but this will hopefully give you some ideas to get you started.

2) Supporting children and young people

Death can be a difficult concept for a child or young person. It can be assumed that children are not always aware of what is happening and yet it is a serious mistake to think this is the case. C&YP will grieve in the same way as anyone else. It is often that their needs to be able to work through the process of grief are different as they have differing levels of comprehension.

C&YP are not always told about the death of family or friends, because it is sometimes thought they would not understand or be able to cope with the concept. There may be a desire from those who care for them to protect them from pain, or there may be fear around how they may react to such an integral part of human experience. But, loss is a universal human experience; we will all experience bereavement and loss at some point in our life.

Despite the progress we have made to involve C&YP when there is a bereavement or period of loss, a lack of understanding can still mean that their emotional needs are neglected.

For a child or young person, their age and ability to communicate and express their feelings can be a barrier for the adults who are supporting them, particularly at a time when that adult is also grieving and trying to work through their own emotions.

By identifying potential challenges we can explore a range of approaches in an effort to support the emotional needs of C&YP. An understanding of the concept of bereavement and loss is important to help support and guide a deeper understanding for C&YP. It is a very unique experience for each person.

A very simple way to understand the concept of loss and grief is:

Anything can be lost – things we use, pets we have, people we love.

Bereavement is what happens after that loss. How you feel. What you do. Things you miss. Ways you remember.

No one person is the same. All of the above is effected by our relationship to what or who we have lost/ people we have to support us / our personality / our religion / our values / what we have had to deal with in the past / what we are dealing with in the present / etc.

There is no 'right' way to grieve. Also, because everyone grieves differently it can feel like a very lonely and isolating place. Even within a family there can be many different responses to loss.

It is natural to want to protect the others from experiencing the pain of their grief, but it is also important to recognise and acknowledge their feelings and not underestimate their capacity to mourn.

Where do I even start?

As a parent or carer you probably already know that children rarely work to other people's timetables, they often pick really inconvenient times to ask questions or to start a serious conversation about their feelings and thoughts. This isn't something that they've decided to do to be an inconvenience or to challenge your ability to remain calm. Sitting face to face with someone and being asked to express your emotions is hard enough for most adults, but it can simply be too overwhelming for a child or young person. This is why we use a lot of creative interventions and activities with this age group, and our counselling rooms give them the space to move around and pick a chair or spot on the floor that doesn't put them in the 'spotlight'.

Children pick those times when you're distracted by something else to tell you something really important because they feel more confident doing it when they don't have your full and undivided attention, they are less vulnerable.

You may need to let the child know that you have heard their question, or what they have told you about how they are feeling and that you think it's important to you to hear them, but that right now you can't give them the time they need. Maybe make a date to come back to the conversation. When you do pick it back up again try and be sitting side by side or at right angles so that your child had a bit of space and can hopefully avoid feeling overwhelmed by eye contact.

You may also want to let them know that they can raise the subject with you again in the future if they have more questions or have thought about it some more and want to go over it again.

If you have to tell a child or young person that someone has died:

- Explain in simple terms what has happened.
- Let the child/young person know that when someone dies their body has stopped working and nobody can mend it.

- Don't be afraid to show your emotions during this conversation and any subsequent conversations, children learn that their emotions are ok by watching how their loved ones show theirs.
- Encourage the child to talk about the person who has died if they want to.
- If a child/young person wants to view the body this may help with their understanding and concept of death. However, it should not be forced upon them as it may be frightening.
- Talk to the child or young person about the funeral or service. You may like to explain to them exactly what to expect on the day of the service because this will help to reduce their anxiety.
- Even better, involve the child or young person in the arrangements and in the service if they want to be involved. This can really help them to understand the grieving process and to grieve alongside their loved ones.
- Make sure the child/young person has appropriate support during the service and afterwards, if you have a wake or other kind of party they may need somewhere they can go to be on their own for a little while to avoid being overwhelmed.

The picture below is a nice way to explain grief to children and young people, it can help to show how we move forward with our lives while we are grieving. We don't 'move on' and leave our grief behind or forget about the person who has died, we take them with us and we are able to move forwards by expanding our life around our grief.

GROWING AROUND GRIEF

HERE IS A NEW WAY OF THINKING ABOUT GRIEF AND RECOVERY:



THIS CIRCLE REPRESENTS A LIFE THAT IS TOTALLY CONSUMED BY GRIEF.

ONE SHOULD ACCEPT THAT THE GRIEF WILL NEVER ENTIRELY DISAPPEAR, BUT OVER TIME IT WILL BECOME A SMALLER, MORE MANAGEABLE PART OF LIFE.

EVEN THOUGH THE GRIEF IS STILL THERE, A NEW LIFE EXPANDS AROUND IT; ONE IS ABLE TO GROW AROUND GRIEF.

Dr. Lois Tonkin – 'Growing Around Grief'

What does age matter?

Children and Young People's understanding of death and reaction to it can be largely dependent on their age and stage of personal development. As you may know sometimes their actual age doesn't fit into their expected stage of development, so be aware to make allowances for this if it is the case.

Babies and Toddlers

Children of this age do feel the loss of the person who has died.

Even though a baby may not be able to communicate verbally through words at this stage, a loss can still be felt deeply. This is especially so if the person who has died was the main caregiver and comforter. A baby will miss the touch, smell and voice of that person, even though they are not fully able to understand why there is a 'space' where a person used to be. A child this young may feel very unsettled, which can be expressed through increased crying or being unsettled. Sticking to a routine can help a baby

If they are older they may start to ask questions about death. Death is treated as another 'subject' to learn about and the young child will be naturally curious.

Children under 5

At this age children are more likely to ask questions about death, repeatedly so. They may ask the same question more than once. They may also be unable to comprehend that death is forever and may ask questions about when the person will come back. You may have to answer the same questions over and over.

Children this age have quite black and white views on life, they don't work well with metaphor or big concepts. It is best to introduce the word 'dead' and to talk about 'death' as opposed to using words and phrases like 'gone to sleep' or 'lost' – children often go to sleep and sometimes get lost, they will take these words very literally - imagine how scary bedtime gets when you think you may never wake up.

At this age children may also seem to go from running about and playing to withdrawing or crying very quickly. They cannot stay in their grief for long periods and they process information at a different speed to adults.

It can be difficult as an adult to understand how they can jump from one thing to another so fast, particularly if you are also grieving yourself.

Some children may regress in terms of behaviour, becoming clingy or more 'baby-like.'

Children 6+

Older children will start to understand that death is permanent, they may also re-process bereavements that they experienced at an earlier age and start to ask questions again as they come to terms with the facts around their bereavement.

At this age children also come from a place of 'magical thinking' and may use their imaginations to fill in any gaps in the information that they have about someone's death. They may also start to think that they were in some way responsible for the person's death, that maybe something they said or something naughty that they did caused them to die.

As children in this age group become more aware of the permanence of death and that death is an inevitable part of life, they may also develop anxieties or fear around their own safety or that of you as their parent/carer, or their siblings and other family members.

Children at this age need age-appropriate information and to have their questions answered honestly, and to be given a space to ask those questions and express their emotions. They may also need reassurance that nothing they did, thought or said contributed to their loved ones death.

Teenagers

Teenagers will understand fully that death is irreversible. Young adults can be particularly vulnerable as they are going through adolescence, a time of great mental and physical change which may bring extra stress to the grieving process. Young adults may be angry, withdrawn or 'act out.' They may start to take risks as they test the limits of their own mortality. They may start to ask 'big' questions e.g. about life/death and purpose.

Sometimes teenagers will assume the role of adult in the lives of other family members, particularly younger siblings, so it is important that they are also given an opportunity to grieve in their own way.

Important things to consider at any age

- What has the child/young person been told about the illness or death of their loved one? Do they have the detail of what happened? Bear in mind that children's imaginations are brilliant, but that does sometimes unfortunately mean that with a lack of information they may fill in the gaps themselves.
- What do you want them to know? Having a conversation with your partner and other adults in the family is a good idea to establish what you have told your child(ren) to reduce the risk that someone will 'put their foot in it' by mistake or that they will hear important information from outside the family. Remember that most children are extremely IT literate and in some circumstances information about the death of their loved one could be found online. Being as honest as you can be with them can prevent them from finding out things from other children at school for example, or by themselves.
- What do you believe happens to people when they die? Do you share that belief with your child(ren)? Do they fully understand what that means? It is worth having a conversation with your child(ren) to find out what their concept of heaven is for example, as adults we have an understanding that heaven is a place of peace but we have worked with children who have imagined that heaven is a place of loneliness and isolation and cold.
- Has the child had previous experience of death? Pets perhaps? Or have they experienced several significant bereavements and are suffering from the cumulative effects of grief? This could help you understand their reactions and how they cope.
- What relationship did the person who died or is ill have with the child? Even if they are not a close family member they could still be hugely significant and impactful in the child's life. For example, as teenagers start to separate themselves from their parents during adolescence they place increased significance on their friendships.

Self-reflection for parents/carers

What if the relationship you or the child had with the deceased wasn't a positive one? For example, if you are a single parent and their other parent dies, the child or young person will still grieve but may find this a very difficult process, they may try and hide their grief from you if they think that you don't want them to be upset or that you will be angry if they express their sadness.

What about circumstances in which a child was neglected or abused by the person who died? As their parent or carer it may be very difficult for you to understand why the child is grieving, and it may be a complex kind of grief with strong conflicting feelings of sadness, happiness, anger, fear, relief, guilt etc...

You may need to spend some time reflecting on how you feel about the death of this person and consider how you let your child(ren) know that even though you may have been angry or felt negatively towards the person when they were alive, and that being angry is ok even after someone dies, you are also still sad. How will you communicate to your child(ren) that they are free to express their emotions to you and that you will hear them?

It is also really important that you are supported with your grief. Many parents refer their child(ren) for counselling support and explain to us that they haven't accessed support themselves 'because it's more important to get support for my child'. Of course as a parent/carers you are going to put your child first, but when you are unsupported and struggling you're going to find it even harder to support your child. As the saying goes, you can't pour from an empty pot.

You may find that some of the activities in section 4 are useful for you to do as well, you don't have to do them with your child, but maybe find half an hour when you have some time on your own to think about how you are feeling and coping. The relaxation activities can be done by anyone.

3) Loss & Grief

When we lose something or somebody in our lives it can affect us in many ways. Each person will experience the loss differently and may react differently. The grief that may be experienced after a loss is our own personal way of processing our thoughts, feelings and experience.

As grief is processed, a person can experience a myriad of responses, including emotional, physical and psychological ones. These responses can feel overwhelming at times and can vary in intensity and frequency.

Other things can influence our grieving – our thoughts and beliefs, cultural and societal norms, previous experiences of grief, and our understanding of the impact of this loss.

All of these things are a ‘normal’ response to grief, they would only be a cause for concern if these feelings or responses continued over a prolonged period of time, or worsened rather than improving over time.

Responses to grief

Feelings

Sadness
Anger
Guilt
Self-reproach
Anxiety
Loneliness
Fatigue
Helplessness
Shock
Yearning
Relief
Numbness

Physical sensations

Hollowness in stomach
Tightness in the chest
Tightness in the throat
Over-sensitivity to noise
Breathlessness
Muscle weakness
Lack of energy
Dry mouth
Confusion
Preoccupation
Sense of pressure
Hallucinations

Behaviours

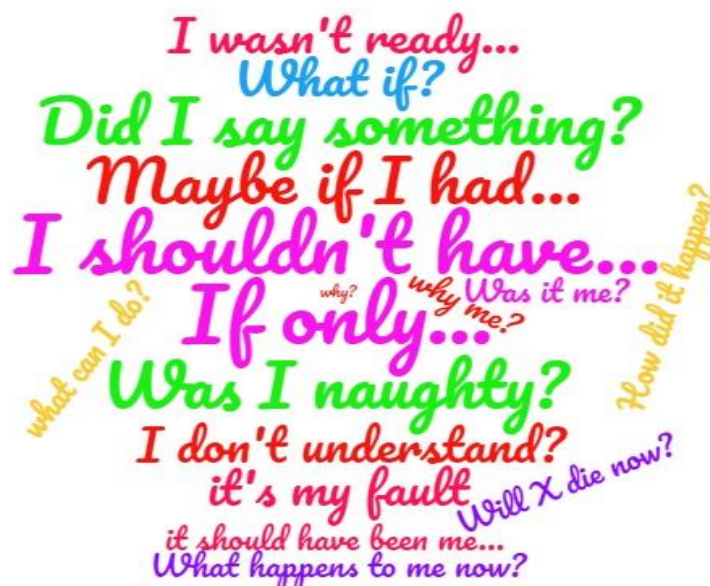
Sleep disturbances
Appetite disturbances
Absent mindedness
Social withdrawal
Dreaming
Searching
Crying
Sighing
Restless over-activity
Visiting old haunts

(Worden 1991)

Emotional Responses to grief/loss

Each person will respond in their own way to their loss. A variety of emotions can be experienced and can feel like a roller coaster ride; one that the child/young person is not in control of and which is ever-changing.

Children/young people (and adults) may have a lot of questions or need information to be able to understand what they are feeling. They may have things that seem to go round and round in their heads.



Psychological Responses

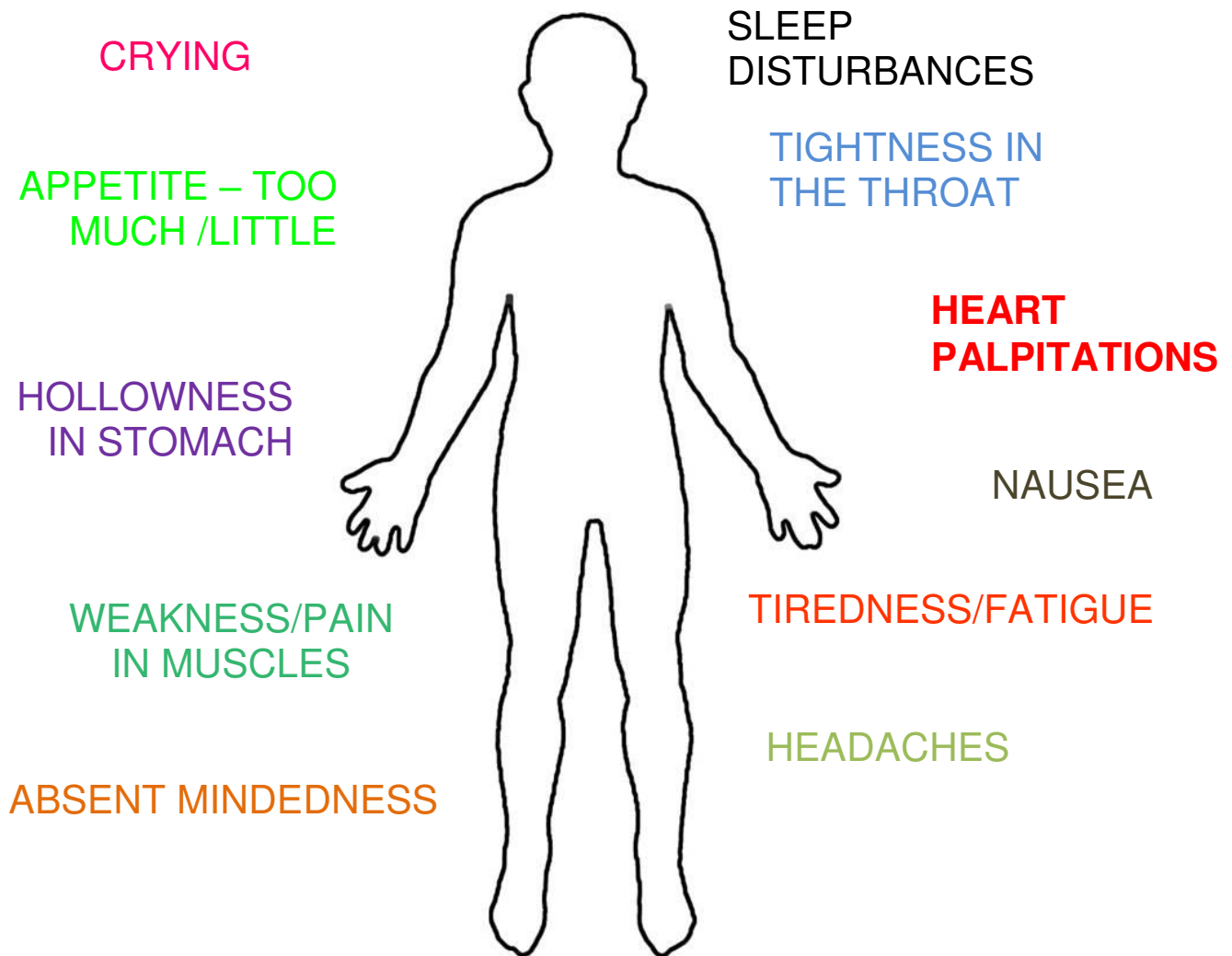
Psychological responses to grief can include feelings that are very similar to depression and anxiety. Depression can disrupt sleep and appetite. Anxiety can cause a racing pulse, hot sweats, poor sleep and loss of appetite.

It's not unusual for someone who is bereaved to clearly see or hear the person who has died. These visual and auditory hallucinations are part of the normal grief reaction and a very real physical occurrence to those who experience them.

We also often dream about someone after they have died, or perhaps think we've seen them in the street or out of the corner of our eye.

Physical Responses

As well as our emotional responses to loss we can experience physical symptoms too. These are all normal responses, but if they continue for a prolonged period of time it might be worth seeing your GP just to check that there's nothing else going on.



4) Creative resources

We have included here a variety of activities and ideas you can do with your child or young person which might help to get them talking, or to express their feelings. There are also some ideas around memorialising

4.1) Talking about feelings

How full is your bucket?

At times when your child is struggling and the smallest thing seems to tip them 'over the edge' into behaviour that might seem negative or destructive, it might be worth talking to them about their 'resilience bucket'.

Imagine that you've got up in the morning and picked up an empty bucket, its light, you're happy just carrying it and swinging it. Your bucket has a tiny little hole in the bottom, but that's ok. So you start to get ready for work and realise there's no milk so you can't have a coffee, you start to feel irritated and that feeling of irritation starts to fill your bucket. Then you can't find your car keys and you search the house looking for them, the anger you're feeling keeps filling your bucket. You finally find your keys and start driving to work and hit stationary traffic, you've got a meeting first thing and you're definitely going to be late, your manager isn't very understanding and all the anxiety and worry that you're feeling now is pouring into your bucket. So you're late to your meeting, your manager is cross, you realise mid-morning that you've forgotten your lunch and didn't pick up any money so you're hungry and that feeling of being uncomfortable and unable to concentrate is starting to fill up your bucket. By the end of the day when you get home your bucket is nearly full, it's so heavy, and even though there's a tiny hole in the bottom letting out some of these feelings, they're happening faster than the bucket can cope with. At this point it only takes one tiny little thing, perhaps your child won't get ready for bed, and your bucket is not only full but it's overflowing. You have to drop it and everything you've been carrying comes flooding out.

Everyone is carrying a bucket around with them, your child or young person may have a bucket they've been carrying for weeks or months after they've been bereaved. Maybe they've had several bereavements, moved house, changed school, had a family separation? Their buckets might be very full, very heavy, and they may have been carrying them around for quite a while.

You could draw a picture of a bucket with your child or young person. Ask them to write in the bucket all the things that they are carrying around with them. Then talk about all the things that help the bucket to empty – Do they have people to talk to? Activities that help to get rid of the feelings? A safe place that helps them to relax? What things make them feel stronger and more able to cope?

This can help you to start to not only build a picture of how full your child's bucket is, but also look at ways of helping them to take some of that weight away, and identify positive coping strategies for when things get heavy.

As an adult it is easy to overlook a child's worries as not being as big or as important as our own. They may seem to be small in comparison to our adult worries. A child's worries are the biggest worries that they have ever faced, so remember, their worries will feel as big as your own.

Mad, Sad and Glad

A simple way of getting everyone in the family talking to each other about their feelings is to ask each person to tell everyone about something that day that has made them mad, something that made them sad, and then something that made them glad. This is something you could perhaps introduce around the table at tea time. Talking about these different emotions and what caused them can help children and young people to understand that everyone (even their parents) feel angry, sad and happy, and that an emotion like anger, which is often perceived as negative, is still a useful emotion and one they can openly discuss.

Worry Circles

Anxiety can be challenging for a child or young person, sometimes it's hard to verbalise what the anxiety is really about and worrying about a lot of different things at once can be overwhelming.

You can talk to your child/young person about anxiety by drawing two worry circles on a sheet of paper. One of these circles is 'I control' and the other is 'I can't control'. Ask them to tell you about each of their worries, and then decide between you which circle that worry goes into.

So for example, they might be worried about the maths homework they have to do for the next day. That can go in the 'I control' circle because they have the power to look at that homework and can put in place something to help deal with it. However, if they are worried about a maths exam then they can't control that so it goes in the 'I can't control' circle.

For all the worries in the 'I control' circle you can come up with an idea for how they can control those worries. Some of the worries in the 'I can't control' circle might have some things you can do as well, like the maths exam, they can make sure they understand the subjects they have been taught and revise for it, which gives them as much control as they can have over that situation. Some of the worries are things that are completely out of their control so you can talk to them about those worries and see if they can come up with ways of accepting that they can't control them and therefore don't want to waste energy worrying about them.

Anger

Anger is a challenging emotion, it is often perceived as being a negative emotion and sometimes children and young people are encouraged to suppress this emotion. Anger can be frightening for those who witness it, or it can cause a spiral of emotion – one person gets angry and in order to 'control' that person, the other person gets angrier, which makes the first person get even angrier... etc. Putting someone in a 'time out' or telling them to calm down when they are angry also doesn't always work, it can just fuel an already heated situation.

Children and young people often express their emotions as anger, there is power in being angry, and other emotions like sadness, grief and fear are far harder and more painful to communicate. It's only once you can help the child or young person to dissipate their anger that you can hopefully support the child/young person to reach their other emotions.

It can help to acknowledge that your child/young person is angry and let them express it in a more positive way. Here are some ways you can help your child/young person to let their anger out:

- Let them scribble hard on a piece of paper or a black board with chalk
- Hit tennis balls or kick footballs against a wall
- Punch a cushion or pillow, or a punch bag if you have one
- Scream into a cushion

- Jump up and down, put some music on and dance around, run up and down the stairs, go for a fast walk/run
- Try the 'shake it off' technique on page 22
- Tear up and rip paper or screw it into balls

4.2) Memories

Memory Box

Memory boxes can be a great way of remembering a person or something we have lost and continuing our relationship with them.

Firstly choose some things that remind you of that person, place, or thing that is lost. It might be pictures, perfume, jewellery or anything that makes you think of them (we have known people who have put a packet of cigarettes in before!).

Then choose an appropriately sized box to fit those items in. You may want to choose a box that represents the person.

As you put the items in think about their significance to the person, it can make you think about the person in a more positive way, which you may not have been able to do before.

You may then want to get the box out to look at when you want to feel closer to that person or maybe when you are having a bad day. It might be that you get it out on birthdays, anniversaries, or Christmas and share what you have put in there with others (if you want to).

Try:

A family memory box! You could work as a family to make one box and each add things that help you to remember as a family all the times that you had together.

Photo/Memory book

You may want to create a photo book or life story book.

You could put pictures together in a photo album or you may want to put photos into a book which can also be written in.

You could write some memories you have of the person into the book and also ask other people to write in the book as well if you wish.

This can be a good idea to do if a project or service is ending or maybe a member of staff is leaving. It could be copied so that each member has their own memories to take away.

You may want to draw pictures of the person or memories and add those into the book also.

You could also use this as a scrapbook (a bit like the memory box) and put any small items you have that are important in it. It may be things like tickets to a concert you went to together or the person's bus pass. Anything which is important to you and that is an important memory for you.

Memory Salt Jars



Using different coloured layers of coloured salt or sand (which each represent a memory or event) in a sealed jar can be a way of remembering a loved one or important events.

1. Gather together a small glass jar with a lid (something the size of a spice jar is ideal), a pen, normal table salt, coloured chinks, felt tip pens and some sheets of A4 paper.
2. Carefully fill the jar up to the top with salt and place it to one side.
3. On a piece of paper write down a list of things you remember about the person who has died that have been important to you. This could be memories of things you have done together, or things about that

person. Having 5/6 memories will be enough, but you can add more or less if you like.

4. Draw a dot of colour next to each memory (for example, blue for a favourite song, pink for a time you did something fun)
5. Spread out the same number of sheets of paper as you have memories and split the salt from the jar between them
6. Colour each pile of salt one of the colours of the dots by rubbing a piece of chalk into the salt, as you rub the salt with the chalk it will change colour. You can make the colour stronger by rubbing for longer.
7. Carefully pour each pile of salt into the jar one at a time to create layers.
8. Gently tap the jar to settle the salt then fill up any remaining space with plain salt to prevent the layers mixing.
9. Put the lid onto your jar really tight and put it somewhere you will see it often. You can keep your memory sheet safe to remind you of your memories, or use it to show friends and family.

Christmas memory baubles

Craft baubles are readily available over the internet (ebay for example) and often in craft stores such as Hobby craft. They come in a range of sizes so do be careful that you don't order some that are very small, or absolutely enormous!

Creating a bauble at Christmas to remember a loved one can be a lovely family activity. Each member of the family may want to make their own bauble, or you could make a joint bauble. You could also make a bauble to remember a family pet.

The baubles that we use are clear, they come in two halves that pop together and can be tied with ribbon.

The idea for filling the bauble can come from anything. We have listed some of the things we think about with our clients below, which may give you ideas about what to put in your bauble...

What did the person who died like?
What was their favourite colour?
What reminds you of them?

You can put anything you like in the bauble. In the past we have used, little pebbles, glitter, confetti, paint, ribbons, small toy animals, toys,

jewellery, make up, hair bobbles, handkerchiefs, leaves, sweets, messages written on folded paper, photos, dog tags, dog collars, song lyrics, cuttings from magazines/books/newspapers, tickets from the cinema... whatever makes that bauble special to the person who has died.

Once you have filled your bauble, the two halves should just pop together. You can add glue to the edges if you want it to remain secure, and then just thread your ribbon through the top, leaving a loop for it to hang on your tree.



Writing a letter

You may feel when someone dies or something changes that there were things you wanted to say that you didn't get chance to.

It can cause us great pain thinking about all these things we wanted to say or do.

One way of helping with this is to write a letter to the person. You may feel angry towards the person and want to tell them, you may want to say you loved them or simply tell them what has been happening since they died.

Once you have written your letter you must then choose what you want to do with it. You could take it their grave and leave it there for them. You may choose to throw it away, the physical throwing away of the letter can help people get it out of their mind. You may have a special box which you could place it in; it really is a personal choice.

Alternatively if you didn't want to write a letter you could record a message or you could draw a picture. You can do whatever you want with what you create when you are finished.

4.3) Coping Strategies

Children/Young people may employ a range of coping mechanisms as a way of self-protecting against the overwhelming experience of grief, and not all of those will be positive ones.

Everyone copes with grief individually. People may not react as you would expect them to.

When we begin to feel overwhelmed by our grief responses we may try to control them by doing other things. Keeping busy, getting irritable, avoiding being alone, watching TV, working, using alcohol or drugs to drown our feelings, self-harm.

It may be easier to pretend the loss hasn't happened, to deny it. It might be very scary to consider letting the emotions come out.

Some days we may feel completely overwhelmed and other days it may feel alright to get on with things. That is OK.

It is normal to feel overwhelmed and want to be in control after a loss. As our resilience builds it should begin to feel more manageable.

We've pulled together some of the activities we use with C&YP which may be useful to you and help you to build some positive coping strategies with your child/young person.

Shake it off

When we feel anxious or worried it can help to move our bodies, shaking our bodies can help to release some of the adrenaline we're storing at times of stress.

Start by standing absolutely still, eyes closed and holding your breath. Then, let go of your breath and start to shake your arms, up in the air, down to the floor, out at the side. Then shake your legs, in front, behind, to the left and to the right. Then jump around shaking your arms and your legs imagining that all your worries are flying off your body like drops of water. When your body feels completely loose you can collapse on the floor or in a chair and let out a big deep breath, getting rid of any left-over worries.

Stay sitting or lying down and take 3 deep breathes in slowly and let them go slowly, then you should feel able to get back on with your day.

Butterflies in my tummy

This activity is designed to encourage a child to communicate the things that are worrying them or making them feel afraid. It helps them to learn to express their fears, prioritise and problem solve around anxiety, and become more self-aware. You can also use this activity to start to build an idea of who the child considers to be part of their support network. This is a particularly useful activity to use with those who present a lot of problems, as it enables them to communicate which problems are most pressing and should be treated as priorities.

You can use a pre-drawn person, or if you have more time/a large enough sheet of paper you can get the child to lie down and draw the outline around their body. You will need cut out butterflies of different shapes and sizes, pens or colouring pencils, glue.

These are some of the conversation points you can use during the activity:

- Everyone has problems and worries, including adults, if appropriate you can share with the child what you worry about as an adult or what you worried about when you were a child.
- Our bodies react to stress in different ways when you're scared, your heart pounds, you can feel like crying, get a lump in your throat. How do you feel when you're scared? How does your child feel?
- When we are worried or nervous, we feel like we have butterflies in our stomach.
- Write your worries on the butterflies; bigger ones on the larger butterflies, smaller worries on the smaller butterflies.
- Glue the butterflies onto the stomach, one at a time.
- As the butterflies are stuck down ask the child to read out the worry, you can ask some open-ended questions to encourage discussion. e.g. "Tell me more about this worry" "What could you do about this worry to help yourself feel better?" "Is there anyone who can help you with this worry?"

At the end of the exercise the body and/or the butterflies can be decorated.

Support Boat

Ask your child or young person to draw a picture of a boat. This is their support boat. In the boat, ask them to draw a picture of themselves and the people in their life who help and support them.

Think of all the relationships that assist them to feel safe and happy, these relationships could also be animals and people who have died.

Talk to your child or young person about their boat, you can also draw a boat and talk to them about the people in your life who support you.



Some ideas of questions to get the conversation going:

- Tell me about your boat.....
- What was it like thinking about the people/relationships you wanted in your boat?
- Can you tell me who each person/relationship is and what support they offer?
- Is there room for more people in your boat in the future?
- Who might they be?

4.4) Grounding/Relaxation Techniques

Connect the senses

Take a deep breath to begin, fill your lungs all the way down to your tummy.

5 LOOK: Look around for 5 things that you can see, and say them out loud. For example, you could say, I see the chair, I see the carpet, I see the door...

4 FEEL: Pay attention to your body and think of 4 things that you can feel, and say them out loud. For example, you could say, I feel my feet warm in my socks, I feel my hairband tight around my wrist, or I feel the chair I am sitting on.

3 LISTEN: Listen for 3 sounds. It could be the sound of traffic outside, the sound of typing or the sound of your tummy rumbling. Say the three things out loud.

2 SMELL: Say two things you can smell. If you're allowed to, it's okay to move to another spot and sniff something. If you can't smell anything at the moment or you can't move, then name your 2 favourite smells.

1 TASTE: Say one thing you can taste. It may be the toothpaste from brushing your teeth, or a mint from after lunch. If you can't taste anything, then say your favourite thing to taste.

Take another deep breath to end.

Body Awareness

1. Take 5 long, deep breaths through your nose, and exhale through your mouth.
2. Place both feet flat on the floor. Wiggle your toes. Curl and uncurl your toes several times. Spend a moment noticing the sensations in your feet.
3. Stamp your feet on the ground several times. Pay attention to the sensations in your feet and legs as you make contact with the ground.

4. Clench your hands into fists, then release the tension. Repeat this 10 times.
5. Press your palms together. Press them harder and hold this pose for 15 seconds. Pay attention to the feeling of tension in your hands and arms.
6. Rub your palms together briskly. Notice and sound and the feeling of warmth.
7. Reach your hands over your head like you're trying to reach the sky. Stretch like this for 5 seconds. Bring your arms down and let them relax at your sides.
8. Take 5 more deep breaths and notice the feeling of calm in your body.

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Sit or Lie in a comfortable position, this can be a useful technique if you are struggling to get to sleep. You're going to clench or tighten each body part and then release it, letting your body and all your muscles relax. Start with your toes, then your feet, ankles, calves, knees, thighs, abdomen, lower back, fingers, hands, wrists, lower arm, upper arm, shoulders & chest, neck, then finally screw up your face and let it go.

Summary

We hope this resource pack has helped you explore the concept of bereavement, loss and grief in relation to the support of C&YP.

By encouraging C&YP to work through bereavement, changes and losses in a caring and sharing environment, with the right help and support they can develop strategies to enable them to gain an understanding of loss in its broadest context and build emotional resilience.

Along the journey of loss, C&YP are gathering lifelong skills of building confidence, self-awareness and are becoming more robust to deal with the one thing we have no control over on our journey through life; death.

These skills could support them throughout their lives, when they have a family and children of their own. In supporting people to build these skills you can have a profound impact on an individual's experience of life and death.

Other support available through the Dove Service

The Dove Service can offer other types of support for children and young people, and you their parent/carers.

We offer specialist counselling for anyone over the age of 4, we have drop-in groups for adults, Dove Buddies groups for adults which are social groups with activities for people who have been bereaved. We can arrange for awareness raising in schools and other community settings and training for children/young people around bereavement and for professionals working with children/young people. We also run a group workshop online called 'facing grief' which can be run for children or adults and which aims to normalise the grieving process.

For more information about services in your area please contact the Dove Service at enquiries@thedoveservice.org.uk or on 01782 914455. You can also have a look at our website: www.thedoveservice.org.uk

References

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- Bowlby J (1980) *Attachment and loss volume 13 loss, sadness and depression*. London, The Hogarth Press and Institute of Psychoanalysis.
- Kalish R (1984) *Death, grief and caring relationships*. Monterey California, Brooks/Cole Publishing Company.
- Parkes CM (1996) *Bereavement studies of grief in adult life (3rd Edition)* London, Routledge.
- Worden JW (1991) *Grief counselling and grief therapy: A handbook for the mental health practitioner (2nd Edition)*. London, Routledge.

Other resources

- ‘As big as it gets’ by Julie Stokes & Diana Crossley, a book available from Winston’s Wish
- ‘When your Mum or Dad has cancer’ by Ann Couldrick, a book available on Amazon
- ‘Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine’ by Diana Crossley for Winston’s Wish, a book available on Amazon
- ‘A monster calls’ by Patrick Ness, available on Amazon

Other organisations

- www.childbereavementuk.org
- www.winstonswish.org
- www.griefencounter.org.uk