

INSIGHT

THE CHILDREN AND FAMILY NEWSLETTER

Saint
Francis
Hospice
Caring for you

Welcome

Welcome to the third edition of Insight.

Did you know??

As part of our roles, we provide bespoke training to organisations supporting bereaved people, this includes schools. Our training is tailored to the needs of the organization, from brief introduction to grief, loss and bereaved to full day/s of awareness, strategies, and implementation of support. We can come to your place of work, or you are able to access our Education Centre, which has the facilities to ensure a smooth running of the day.

Recently our Family and Individual support service team attended a local school to train their staff on grief, loss and bereavement and how they as individuals can support their students.

“Some of the best CPD we have had.”

We were contacted by the pastoral lead who had identified this need and secured a budget for this training. We spent time listening to what support is already in place, their expectations and what was from the training. The main theme was around equipping and empowering the staff there to have the confidence in recognizing the thoughts and behaviours, engaging in conversations with their students around death and dying, and having the knowledge and tools to continue the support. One of the terms that came out from many was “I don’t want to say the wrong thing”.

This information enabled us as a team to put together a bespoke presentation allowing specific areas which focused on their priorities. Sections which gave them time to reflect and time to discuss openly. There were questions that needed answers

born out of experience and their understandings. We also provided useful information on bereavement and contact details of other services that would be helpful.

“It was good to share our experiences.”

The training was over 2 days, capturing 40 staff members. The training took place at the school to ensure those interested in attending the training could access this.

As a team we enjoyed the training, it was a pleasure to listen to the challenges they were facing and we could see how on a human level the impact this has on the staff, along with the everyday challenges that their role brings. We could also see that this school, has already a great support system in place where the need of their students were paramount.

It was also, interesting for us as a team to understand that a lot of the staff there, were not aware we offered the education training. We felt it is important to get this message across, via the newsletter and other means, as we know the positive impact that comes from the training we deliver, in ensuring that the bereaved students have the best support at their school.

If you would like to discuss training requirements for your school please contact us using the detail’s below.

E: familysupportservices@sfh.org.uk

T: **01708 753319**

Family & Individual Support Service.

Case Study

“With our vulnerability comes our strength. Sigmund Freud”.

I met Joe aged 14, earlier this year, he was behaving as a stereo typical boy, I don't need to be here, and I don't need to talk, let's get it over with.

He was introduced by his dad Terry whose father had died, Joe's grandad. Terry was distraught and lost in how he could deal with this situation, lost in his own grief and frightened with the change in his son.

Joe had his guard up and nobody was getting through it. A larger than life character, extremely thoughtful, and extremely mature in his thoughts. Joe was extremely close to his grandad, a real role model. We talked about Joe's interests and established grounds for us to communicate. We walked around the grounds and talked and I met him emotionally in a place that seemed comfortable for him.

What was Joe feeling? He was angry and displaying this in school which was not his usual behaviour. This can be normal in grief for individuals to not understand what is going on and display emotions they can understand, anger being one to turn too. We discussed the anger and how he felt about it, we talked about coping mechanisms that worked for him, and how he might deal with this anger when it came on. Joe was distracted and in the sessions fiddled with other things and avoided eye contact as much as he could. The school supported Joe as best they could and had breakout rooms for him

and individual points of contact set up for him. Joe was angry and everything annoyed him and his peers didn't always help him with this. We had many sessions exploring his thoughts and during this time I took time to speak to Terry without breaking any confidences and help them both understand what was going on and how to support each other. We also discussed keeping his school updated so we had a united approach. Joe got stronger, physically sat up more in the sessions, the distractions started to become fewer, when we discussed him not looking at me, he reflected on this and consciously changed his attention towards me and the sessions. The therapeutic relationship grew the more Joe reflected and Joe worked out for himself the best way for him to deal with his situation, his school work improved, his relationships with staff and peers improved and Joe and his dad Terry and family worked together to support each other alongside Joe.

Joe attended our outdoor events with Terry his dad and participated with real enthusiasm.

Joe had a period of time away from sessions in order to see how it worked for him and we then organised a final session for Joe and me to summarise and end Joes sessions.

In Joe's words:

Thank you for helping me with everything, I couldn't have asked for better support.

In his Dads words:

We can't thank you enough he has turned it all around and is back stronger and happier.

Names have been changed to respect confidentiality.

Bedford's Park

Family and Individual Support Services.

Children's Group for ages 3 to 13 years.

"I am so glad I came today; I wasn't going to" Elliot age 10.

"It is unbelievable to see the difference in the children" Gaynor, Parent.

As part of our funding from City Bridge Investment we arrange trips throughout the year, and this month a trip was arranged to take the children to Bedford's Park visitors Centre and experience an educational outdoor event.

The children were led by Emma from the visitor Centre and we all went deep into the woods to experience, looking at insects and bugs, cuddly toys, to talk about foxes and frogs and see the deer's. They made souvenirs for themselves from wood, climbed and spent time in hammocks and hideouts. They cooked with mud using pots and pans.

The highlight for them all was to build a campfire, which they sat around and toasted marshmallows. The children smiled and laughed and ran around talking and playing with each other.

The children attending our groups have shown improved coping skills and increased resilience within their grief. Each child supports each other, giving a sense of validation and normalisation, helping young people to feel that their grief was a natural and normal part of the human experience.

A memorable and great day for all.

Stella & Peter

MEET THE TEAM



STELLA
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My work with Saint Francis Hospice started 14 years ago, as a volunteer counsellor and then moving on to working with families and children. I use creative ways to help our children and families open and talk through their individual experiences of grief, and loss. Time given is of essence for our young clients to process the change to their lives.



PETER
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I joined the Family and Individual Support Services Team at Saint Francis Hospice this September as a Child and Family Therapist. Prior to my role, I was their Volunteer Bereavement Counsellor for 4 years. I have previously worked as a counsellor in schools, colleges, with the NSPCC and Childline.

Autumn is Here

Autumn leaves
Red, gold and brown
Falling, swirling,
Drifting down.

Swallows gather
Swooping up high.
Off they go
To Africa, they fly.

Prickly conkers
Cracking, popping.
Branches snap,
Acorns dropping.

Hibernating hedgehog,
Finds somewhere to sleep.
Be sure it's not your bonfire
Or your rubbish heap.

Picking pumpkins,
Juicy apples too.
Gathering blackberries
In hedgerows for you.

Shorter days,
Frosty and wet.
Winter's round the corner,
But not quite yet.

Foggy mornings
Damp, cold and grey.
Nature's blanket,
Clouding the day.

