

## It's OK to show feelings!

When someone dies, children and young people often wonder what is going on for the adults. How do they feel? Are they sad, angry, upset? Do they cry? Sometimes they will repress their own reactions in an effort to protect adults. Show them how you are feeling. This helps children and young people to feel safe sharing their own feelings.

### Let them know:

- It is OK to cry
- It is OK to be sad
- It is OK to be angry
- It is even OK to smile

With this in mind, it is important that adults face their own feelings about the loss. Be open and honest with your feelings. Create an atmosphere of open acceptance that invites questions and discussion and that fosters confidence and love.

## Taking Care of YOU!



As part of its range of services, Strathcarron also offers support to adults who have been affected by the death of someone important to them. A member of our support team can visit you at home, or you can meet with them at the hospice. This will give you an opportunity to talk about how you are feeling and for us to support you through this extremely difficult time. Over a number of meetings we can help you start to cope better with your emotions and the activities of daily living. To receive this support, please contact a member of the Bereavement Support Team.



For more information on Strathcarron's Bereavement Support Service, or to make a referral to the 'Seasons' group, please contact:

### The Bereavement Support Team

**Strathcarron Hospice**

**Randolph Hill**

**Denny**

**Stirlingshire**

**FK6 5HJ**

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**Web: [www.strathcarronhospice.org](http://www.strathcarronhospice.org)**

Please also refer to our website or your local directory for further information on support agencies.

*Seasons For Growth originated in Australia.*

*[www.seasonsforgrowth.org](http://www.seasonsforgrowth.org)*

*The Notredame Centre, Glasgow,  
is the license holder in Scotland.*

*[www.notredame.org.uk](http://www.notredame.org.uk)*

# STRATHCARRON'S BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SERVICE



## Children and Young People

**Information leaflet for  
parents and carers**





At Strathcarron we recognise that the death of someone important can impact on everyone, no matter what their age. For children and young people this experience can be a confusing roller coaster of emotions. They are still learning about the world and their place within it and may have many questions about

*"We talked about memories and mum gave me a picture of Grandpa when he went with us to the caravan. Sometimes I wish he could see me win at swimming. I remember him cheering me." Stuart, age 14.*

what happens when someone dies. Like adults, children and young people grieve in a variety of ways. Sadness, anger, guilt and anxiety are just some of the feelings that can emerge, often interspersed with times of play and laughter. This is a necessary and normal part of grief. With appropriate support and information children and young people, just like adults, can begin to understand what has happened and live with their loss.

## The 'Seasons' Group

The 'Seasons' groups at Strathcarron are designed specifically for children and young people, aged 6 to 18, who have experienced the death of someone important to them.



'Seasons' aims to help children and young people understand loss and change, providing them with practical tools and strategies to manage their responses. Participants can:

- Learn about the effects of significant change in their lives
- Examine how changes in family structure because of death can be accompanied by a sense of loss
- Understand that it is normal to experience a range of emotions because of loss
- Develop new skills in coping with their feelings and reactions to death
- Appreciate and nurture their strengths
- Explore concepts such as decision making and support networks
- Have FUN with a group of similarly aged children and young people

## How does the 'Seasons' group work?

'Seasons' is about individual responses to loss and change. It does not focus on circumstances or issues that are private to families. It is not counselling or therapy. It is an opportunity for children and young people to learn about and manage the issues they experience because of loss, in a SAFE, COMFORTABLE, EDUCATIONAL and FUN environment.

*"Everyone was nice. I liked the biscuits when you get there" Jo, age 8.*

## At a 'Seasons' Group . . .

- Children and young people join a group of 4 to 8 people of a similar age.
- Two trained staff will facilitate 8 sessions over a period of 8 weeks. Each session lasts approximately one hour. A celebration session is held at the end of the 8 weeks providing an opportunity for the group to reconnect and mark their time together.
- Children and young people participate in a variety of age-appropriate, FUN activities that may vary from arts and crafts to ball games.
- Participation is voluntary. This means that the child/young person must be aware that they are being referred to a group and willing to attend.
- Parents/carers are invited to participate in a separate group whilst their child attends the 'Seasons' group. This adult group offers support and advice around both their own and their child's bereavement. Tea, coffee and snacks are available throughout this informal, yet informative group.

*"In the group I found new friends to talk to because everyone had lost someone special. I said I was scared that my mum might die too and then Jamie said that he was worried about his dad" Claire, age 11.*

'Seasons' groups run regularly in 8 week blocks. Referrals can be made at any time during the year by the child/young person or anyone involved in their care. Please refer to the back of this flyer for information on how to make a referral.

## What can adults do?

➤ **Significant change and loss often mean a young person needs to re-establish their self-identity. 'Who am I?' becomes a major concern.**

Help them in their search. If they seek you out to talk, be available and REALLY listen.

➤ **A major loss can bring up fear of abandonment. If a main carer has died, children and young people may wonder if anyone will be able to take care of them properly.**

Reassure the young person that you are there. Remember the importance of touch. A hug conveys much – "I am here if you need me".

*"I sometimes used to get angry and then I would feel bad but it's ok to get angry sometimes." Andrew, age 17.*

➤ **Children and young people tend to react to death in very different ways. Withdrawal, aggression, anxiety, anger, sadness, guilt and regression are just some of the signs of grief.**

By trying to understand children and young people, we can help them to find constructive ways to manage these reactions.

Keep to the normal routine as much as possible. Maintain clear boundaries. This is very reassuring for children and young people and shows them that you care.

*"I learnt that goodbyes are special" Emma, age 9.*

➤ **When young people are grieving they may have short attention spans and difficulty in concentrating.**

Be patient. Recognise that they are not being intentionally disobedient.

➤ **What children and young people don't know they will often make up or guess.**

Talk to them. Offer clear, simple, truthful information in words that the child or young person can understand.

