

GREENWICH CRUSE

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLES BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SERVICE

Greenwich Cruse has delivered bereavement support services in the Borough of Greenwich for 25 years, providing excellence in care from a dedicated team of highly skilled and experienced volunteers.

Until now, we have only worked with adults. But from 6th October 2009, we will be delivering bereavement support to children and young people too.

Grief is an issue for children. The death of a parent, carer, sibling or relative may provoke a raft of difficult reactions in a young person. With suitable interventions, we hope to enable children and young people to find ways to cope with loss, and to adapt to life without the person who has died.

The work is very important because there is evidence to suggest that childhood grief impacts not only on the immediate mental well-being of the child, but on their future happiness in life also. A few hours of supportive work – to have grief acknowledged, to speak the unspeakable in a caring space - cannot take the loss away. But this will help a young person to start to find their inner resources and adjust to irreversible changes.



Working with children and young people requires specialised skills and the right volunteers too. We have spent the last two years planning the service, training team members, establishing how the work will be managed in a safe and professional way, and piloting the service to ensure it works.

We aim to commence work with child clients quickly as possible after referral. We offer up to six sessions of bereavement support. The work happens here at Greenwich Cruse. Although the age of the child or young person will influence the types of intervention, everyone from the very young, to the older teenaged clients, will be able to access the right support for their needs.

All clients are seen on their own in a confidential and safe environment. Bereavement support involves a good deal of talking. Sometimes we make use of creative media to enable grieving children to fully explore and express their grief. We have bought a lot of lovely resources to support this work – each carefully chosen, based on best practice. Although it is our aim to create a more child-friendly atmosphere here in time, much of our expenditure has so far been directed at

training needs. Our volunteers will have their knowledge and skills developed with a constant round of training.

Outreach work is another aspect of our service that we have already offered. This is available to schools experiencing a communal loss.

All our work complies with the Cruse Bereavement Care Children and Young People's Service Provision Standards, and we liaise with Road for You (RD4U). RD4U is a division of Cruse providing a telephone support line, and a web-based user-group for bereaved children and young adults.

Greenwich Cruse has a reputation for the quality of service we deliver. We aim to gain a reputation for excellence in our work with younger children people too.

Everyone who has contributed to this project has brought something different. The fundraisers and benefactors brought financial support. The trainers and supervisors brought patience and wisdom needed to develop the structure. The different committee members brought practical guidance and experience to the management of the project. From inception to commencement, counsellors have been pivotal in enabling the delivery of the C&YP service. Receptionists have given freely of their time to create a welcoming and safe environment for the grieving. Each person involved has played an important role in the development of what seemed like a fairly impossible task at times: a service of excellence supporting children and young people suffering grief.



The future holds many unknowns. Demand will increase, and this will require an expansion of our Children's and Young People's counsellor numbers. New volunteers will be needed, whether as bereavement volunteers, receptionists, fundraisers and so on. This is not the end of the story. It has only just begun. Thank you for your support so far

Children can self refer, or may be referred by a relative or carer via our Helpline on:

8850 0505



Restoring Hope

