

P 234

BEREAVED GROUPWORK PILOT WITH CHILDREN AGED 7 TO 8 YEARS OLD

Emma Jan,¹ Lynne Stafford,¹ Mary Holland². ¹*CancerCare, Lancaster, United Kingdom;* ²*Palliative Care Clinical Nurse Specialists, Westmorland General Hospital, Kendal*

10.1136/bmjspcare-2014-000654.275

CancerCare is a charity dedicated to helping local people whose lives are affected by cancer and other life limiting conditions. Services are free to anyone in North Lancashire and South Lakeland.

The Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) support 3 to 18 year olds. In February 2013, CancerCare decided to undertake a pilot study to assess the feasibility of providing a

therapeutic group for all bereaved children, not just cancer-related. The aims included:

- ▶ Normalising the children's experience of bereavement
- ▶ Decreasing their sense of isolation
- ▶ Allowing them to communicate their feelings around grief
- ▶ Sharing their experience of bereavement with others
- ▶ Receiving peer support
- ▶ Building emotional resilience
- ▶ Recognising support in their environments
- ▶ Working creatively and expressively to process their feelings around loss
- ▶ The pilot study was for children aged 7 to 8 years old.

Change was measured using feedback questionnaires and a pre/post intervention outcome tool, the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire completed by parents at the beginning and end of the groupwork. Children, who had high impact scores, indicating bereavement was greatly affecting their lives, showed a decrease in their scores at the end of the group; a shift towards greater emotional health. One child moved to a higher score at the end of the group; signifying an 'unlocking' of some aspects of grief the child was holding. The child was offered an onward referral for 1–2–1 therapy within CancerCare, following the end of groupwork.

In conclusion, the results demonstrate both children, and parents, found the group helpful and transformative. The pilot study identified a correlation between the original aims, and the outcomes experienced by children and parents.

The vision of Cancer Care is to build upon the success of the pilot study, offering further therapeutic bereavement groups to children in years 5–6 in the Autumn term followed by secondary schools in 2014.