

P-09

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE (CYP) SUPPORT WORKER: A CHILDREN IN NEED SUPPORTED PROJECT – THE FIRST FEW MONTHS

Jenny Warren, Louise Greenaway, Lusia Coombes. *Compton Care, Wolverhampton, UK*

10.1136/spcare-2023-HUNC.31

Compton Care were successfully awarded funding from Children In Need to fund a 3-year project starting December 2022. There is little support locally for children and young people and this funding allows Compton Care to further extend its support to the community. The main objectives for the project are to reduce social isolation for children and young people experiencing bereavement and to support the families of those children and young people in talking about death, dying and grief.

The support worker offers 1:1 support or group sessions at the hospice, off site and even in school if the young person wishes it – wherever they feel most comfortable, adding to our existing child and adult counselling services. The CYP support worker has devised and runs a calendar of events for the year such as a giant Easter Egg hunt in the extensive hospice grounds and meaningful opportunities to engage around key dates such as Father's Day, Mother's Day etc. Families are invited to be part of creative, fun and engaging wellbeing activities and local charities and organisations support with opportunities such as football training. We recognise the differing needs in ages and abilities, adapting as needed, however, often the older kids wish to be part of the 'organising' of events alongside the support worker, further empowering them and encouraging confidence building.

So far outcomes and feedback have been positive with around 32 children and young people affected by having loved ones needing palliative or end of life care supported by the service to date along with their families. As the project has progressed we have recruited two volunteers to support the running of events and we anticipate that the number of families we support will continue to increase which will provide further peer support for the children and young people.

P-10

PARENTING COURSE – SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD THROUGH LOSS AND GRIEF

Sally Roberts, Karen Ward. *Birmingham Hospice, Birmingham, UK*

10.1136/spcare-2023-HUNC.32

Background The ethos of our service for supporting children when someone is dying or has died is not only to provide 1:1 and peer group support but also to upskill schools and parents/guardians in their needs as a grieving child. We were not aware of any other local services that provided this education.

Aim Our aim was to produce and present a Parents' Course that provides information on all aspects of a child's journey through grief. We acknowledge that a child's grief changes over time and parents need to have insight and knowledge to help their child and to recognise when they may need more professional help. At the end of the course we want parents to feel more confident and be able to not just understand why children grieve but also have some practical insight and skills into how to help them. This is aimed at both pre and post bereavement.

Methods To offer a six session course at monthly intervals. Each session would cover a specific aspect of a child's grief journey: Session 1 – How do children grieve. Session 2 – How childhood development impacts on grief. Session 3 – How to communicate with your child to discuss their feelings. Session 4 – Inner child and their spiritual beliefs. Session 5 – The importance of capturing memories. Session 6 – Review of the course and self care.

Results Five parents have regularly attended the pilot course which commenced earlier this year. Sharing in group. Positive feedback. Parents' connections. Resource provided.

Conclusion The course still has two sessions to complete and at this time we will provide a handbook to accompany the course, also asking for them to complete an evaluation. Parents have engaged fully and shared verbal feedback of how they are feeling more competent to navigate their child's new behaviour.

P-11

'LITTLE GEM' – A BOOKLET TO FACILITATE UNDERSTANDING, COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES FOLLOWING BEREAVEMENT

Jules Kirk, Sarah Cundill. *Treetops Hospice, Risley, UK*

10.1136/spcare-2023-HUNC.33

Background Our extensive experience over numerous clinical assessments and repeated enquiries highlighted that family members have differing needs and grieve in varying ways following a bereavement. Research supported this, indicating a potential negative impact on communication and relationships within families (Worden. Children and grief: when a parent died. 1996; Walsh, McGoldrick. Living beyond loss: death in the family. 2004; Christ. Healing children's grief: surviving a parent's death from cancer. 2000). We sought funding from Children in Need to develop a booklet for families to gain helpful insight into the grieving process of a child and advice on how to begin conversations around death and dying.

Aims To write and produce a booklet to support parents/carers who have a child under 12 who has been recently bereaved; collecting and evaluating qualitative feedback from families and professionals on its use and effectiveness.

Methods Research of a number of existing publications found literature was either aimed at the adult or the child. We designed a double-fronted booklet to merge these needs allowing both adult and child to gain an understanding of crucial aspects around death and dying and make sense of their shared experience, introducing a character called 'Little Gem' as a guide for the child. Gathering feedback from professionals and families on the draft version, we incorporated this along with input from illustrators and graphic designers to produce both the character 'Little Gem' and the final booklet. Themes include: a child's developmental understanding of death; their reactions to grief; knowledge around practicalities such as funerals; and broaching difficult subjects, for example the manner of death.

Outcomes An evidence based, collaboratively developed booklet is now utilised in response to enquiries from families and professionals or offered when deemed clinically appropriate during an assessment. Initial qualitative feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. A limited print run allows for amendments following further evaluation.