

Resources for dealing with Loss and Grief

1.) Good Grief Program

Boston Medical Center
Department of Pediatrics
Vose Hall, 403
92 East Concord Street
Boston, MA 02118
Call: **617.414.4005** or **617.921.4008** Fax: **617.414.7915**
Maria.Trozzi@bmc.org or marilyn.Augustyn@bmc.org

Good Grief Program Services

The CIRCLE

Our mission is to provide families with bereavement support in a safe place where they may find individual expression for their loss and develop competence in managing their grief in ways that promote resiliency and self-esteem. The CIRCLE provides direct bereavement support for children and parents or guardians. The program encourages remembering and sharing through creative outlets such as writing, playing, singing and creating art. The CIRCLE is offered two Monday evenings a month throughout the school year, from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. The program includes children ages 5 to 13, with an accompanying adult in each family group. The curriculum follows the four stages of mourning as developed by Dr. Sandra Fox, founder of the Good Grief Program. A free pizza dinner is served.

The South Shore CIRCLE: This CIRCLE meets every other Monday from 6:00 to 8:00 pm throughout the school year. To learn more, please call Maria Trozzi at 617.414.4005.

The Family Support Assessment Clinic

When a child is facing a transition, a trauma or anything in between that challenges coping skills, clinicians can turn to the Family Support Assessment Clinic. The clinic provides support in the following instances:

- At the time of a difficult diagnosis of a family member
- When the family is facing a change that affects or disrupts the child
- When an infant is sent to the NICU
- When a child is struggling to adjust to a difficult change
- When a child is affected negatively by a parent or sibling illness or disorder

In each of these cases, families are understandably overwhelmed. Providing the child's primary caregiver with developmentally appropriate information will serve the child in two ways:

- The parent will be more prepared to cope with the stressor
- The parent will have increased capacity to gain support from extended family, the community, the child's school, etc., which will benefit the child and ameliorate the isolation, a hallmark of traumatic loss.

The Family Support Assessment Clinic will work collaboratively with the pediatrician to amplify his/her effectiveness, in particular, to:

- Help the parent more fully understand what this means to the child
- Recognize symptoms of the stressor
- "Find the words" and use language more effectively
- Access different help when it's required

The clinic will be staffed by a developmental and behavioral pediatrician and a mental health clinician. Referring providers are welcome to attend the visit if a team approach would be supportive. Appointments are made only by referral from the child's primary care provider.

2.) The Children's Room

1210 Massachusetts Ave.

Arlington, MA 02476

Phone: **(781) 641-4741**

Fax: **(781) 641-0012**

Email: **info@childrensroom.org**

Our business office hours: Monday through Friday

9:30 am to 5:30 pm.

Peer Support Groups

Thanks for your interest in learning more about peer support groups at The Children's Room. Through our groups, we seek to offer children, teens, and their families an opportunity to find connection and community after the death of an immediate family member. Read on for answers to frequently asked questions about our groups.

Who comes to support groups at The Children's Room?

Families come to The Children's Room (TCR) after the death of an immediate family member, typically a parent or a sibling. Children and teenagers (ages 3 – 18) come with their parent(s) or guardian(s). Family members all attend group on the same afternoon or evening.

When and where do groups meet?

Groups meet during the school year on weeknight evenings (Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday) and Sunday afternoons.

Groups meet every other week for an hour and a half. All

groups meet at our center, 1210 Massachusetts Ave., in Arlington. *Please note: Families must first come to an orientation and complete a family application before attending a group. More information on this process is below.

Can my family just drop in?

Our groups are not drop-in groups. We will work with your family to match you with an ongoing group that works for you. There's more information on the application and placement process below. How can my family and I sign up for a group?

How can my family and I sign up for a group?

Please call us at 781.641.4741 or email info@childrensroom.org. We'll be happy to answer your initial questions about the program, to gather some basic information about your family's situation, and to schedule you for a family orientation. The orientation will give your family a chance to see our center, meet TCR staff and volunteers, and get a sense of whether TCR is right for your family. You'll receive a family application at that time. TCR program staff will review the family's information, schedule preferences and any additional information provided by the family. Families are then assigned to a group that best fits their needs and schedule. Unfortunately, sometimes a family's schedule or preference may not match the current group availability, and they will be placed on a waitlist.

When do groups begin?

Our program year begins in late September/early October and runs through mid-June. In order to maintain safety and group cohesion among participants, families typically enter groups at two distinct times during the year. New families are placed in groups in either October or February.

How long do families come to groups?

Once a family is placed in a group they are welcome to stay as long as they feel they need to be here. Typically families stay anywhere from 1 – 3 years.

(Information about **The Children's Room** continued)

Is there a charge for groups?

There is currently no charge for our groups. We do invite families to make voluntary donations if they are in the position to do so.

What happens in a group at The Children's Room?

Each "group" of families at The Children's Room is really several smaller groups for much of each meeting. Family members split into smaller groups by age. Typically, there is a 3-5 year old group, an elementary aged group, and a tween/teen group. Adults have their own group. Each smaller grouping is facilitated by two or more trained volunteers.

Children and teens typically start with an opening circle in which they share their names and introduce who in their family has died. Often there will be an activity or discussion related to some aspect of the grief experience. Facilitators utilize creative methods including art, music, play and poetry to encourage grief expression, memory sharing, feelings exploration, and self-care.

Verbal sharing is often part of our groups, however it is always optional and we never pressure children to speak.

While your children participate in their group, we offer a simultaneous peer support group for the adults. Facilitated by trained volunteers, this group has multiple aims. In the parent group, we hope to provide a safe space in which parents/caregivers can find peer support around the challenges of parenting grieving children and teens and around their own experiences of grief. The adult group can also be a venue in which to share information about developmental issues among grieving children and teens to parents/caregivers. Facilitators work together with the adult participants to create an environment that is welcoming to the range of perspectives, feelings, needs, and experiences members may bring.

At the end of every group meeting, adults and kids come together to close the group in a big circle. This is a time when the group's staff coordinator may make announcements, and when we recognize several special occasions including anniversaries of your loved one's death and birthdays of children and teens in groups. During this time we also welcome new families and volunteers and say goodbye to families or volunteers who are leaving.

Who facilitates the support groups?

All groups are based on a peer support model and facilitated by trained volunteers who are supervised by a professional program staff member. All volunteer facilitators must complete a 32-hour

training on theoretical models of grieving, child development, reflective practice, and group facilitation. All volunteers have an entrance interview with a member of our professional staff prior to being placed in a group. Many of our volunteer facilitators work within the mental health, social service or educational field and have been drawn to this work because of their own experiences of loss as a child.

How do I know if a group will be right for me?

Deciding on whether you or your children would benefit from a peer support group is a personal decision that every family must make for themselves. If you are unsure whether or not a group will be right for you, here are a few helpful things to consider:

It is often helpful to discuss the possibility of starting a group with your family, especially children and teens, to hear what they have to say. Ultimately, you know your child the best and your children, although young, are wise to what they need at this time.

(Information about **The Children's Room** continued)

Families may find it challenging to begin a group immediately following their loss. If you are unsure at this time and your loss was very recent you may consider taking a few weeks or months to think about the decision.

Coming to a family orientation, where you can learn more about the program, see the space, and get a feel for what a group might look like can be helpful in making decisions about starting a group.

3.) Jeff's Place Children's Bereavement Center, Inc.

34 Deloss Street
Framingham, MA 01702
Phone: **508-879-2800**

Jeff's Place:

Mission

Jeff's Place facilitates healthy integration of loss for children, teens, and their families by helping them feel connected with each other and less alone in their grief journey.

Vision

No child grieves alone.

Philosophy

We believe that the expert on grief is the one who is grieving
We reassure that there is no right or wrong way to grieve
We promote peer-to-peer connections to decrease feelings of isolation
We build confidence and self-esteem through trusting and empathic bonds
We encourage kids to explore their grief through play
We help integrate memories into a new life story
We provide hope, healing, and meaningful growth for all whose lives we touch

How is Jeff's Place unique?

We provide FREE support services within MetroWest Boston, facilitated by licensed clinicians. Jeff's Place also offers crisis intervention and professional educational trainings on childhood bereavement for local schools and organizations. Jeff's Place has grown through the vision, personal and professional experience of its Founder, Jenny Kaplan Schreiber, who is a bereaved sibling, licensed independent clinical social worker, doctoral candidate, and has worked with grieving children and their families for more than 20 years. She is a pioneer of evidence-based best practices for bereaved children and teens. Jeff's Place is the lead organization for a national research study to identify the best ways to support grieving children and teens.

4.) Care Dimensions - Hospice / Palliative Care / Support Groups

70 Walnut Street, Suite 301

Wellesley, MA 02481

855-774-5100

Grief@CareDimensions.org

Sharing and Healing

Though grief and healing has its own pace, professional support can facilitate this difficult journey. Care Dimensions offers one of the most comprehensive grief support programs in New England. Our licensed bereavement counselors and child life specialists provide support groups and workshops for children and adults.

In a calm and supportive setting, we will help you understand the grieving process and teach you ways to manage grief and find the strength to heal. **Most services are provided free of charge** to anyone in the community, regardless of whether their loved one received care from Care Dimensions.

Support Groups

Led by experienced bereavement professionals, our support groups bring people together to share feelings, console one another, or simply observe and listen. Visit our calendar for current offerings. Groups include:

- Living After Your Losses – monthly, drop-in support group
- Empty Arms – for parents who have lost a child
- Loss of Spouse/Partner
- Adult Loss of Parent
- Loss of Adult Child
- Coping with Grief and Loss
- Young Widowed
- Suicide Bereavement

Hands-On Workshops

Interactive one-time workshops address specific issues and help participants find practical ways to manage grief. Visit our calendar for current offerings. Topics include:

- Newly bereaved – For a loss within last three months
- Mending Hearts – Loss of a difficult relationship
- Continuing Bonds – Loss of a friendship
- Healing Hands and Hearts – Support for caregivers

Children's Support Groups

Our child life specialist helps children who have experienced the death of a family member, a friend or even a pet. Visit our Bereavement Calendar for current offerings. Our Children's Program groups run for 6 – 8 weeks at a time (one session per week). Led by experienced child life, expressive arts, and bereavement professionals, these groups provide children ages 4 – 12 with support, a sense of community, and an opportunity to express themselves. Children are divided into two age groups (typically ages 4 – 8 and 9 – 12), and a concurrent "Raising Grieving Children" program is offered to parents/guardians. We are also planning special programming for teenagers. Please call 855-774-5100 for more information.

Camp Stepping Stones combines children's activities with parent workshops in a casual summer retreat setting.

(Information about **Care Dimensions - Hospice / Palliative Care / Support Groups** continued)

Where You Need Us to Be

Our bereavement program provides grief workshops and support groups at:

Bertolon Center for Grief & Healing in Danvers

Our **Wellesley office**, and **Community locations** (including workplaces, schools and churches)
For more information or to register for a grief workshop or support group, please call, email, or pre-register online through the **Calendar** listings. Advance registration is required for groups and dates and times are subject to change.

5.) Grief Recovery After a Substance Passing

Boston GRASP Chapter

Rhonda Lotti

781-254-1280

bostongrasp

2nd Wednesday of every month 7-8:30

St. Elizabeth's Hospital

736 Cambridge St.

Brighton, MA

Please call to pre-register

MetroWest GRASP

Kathy Leonard

(508) 460-2002

metrowestgrasp

Meetings are held the first Thursday of every month from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at

First Church in Marlborough

37 High Street

Marlborough, MA 01752