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Jigsaw4u provides a unique child centred approach that enables children and young people to deal with situations of loss and trauma in all its guises and promotes their active participation in decision making in their own lives, the development of Jigsaw4u and in local, regional and national services.

Facts about grief support

- Every 30 minutes in the UK, a child under 18 is bereaved of a parent i.e. 53 children and day almost 20,00 per year
- 3% of 5 to 15 year olds have experienced the death of a parent or sibling i.e. 255,000 young people in the UK
- 71% of children and young people supported by Jigsaw4u in 2003-04 had experienced the death of a parent

Jigsaw4u provides support to families where a parent or child has died as a result of illness, accident, suicide or murder.

Helping parents and children cope when someone close to them dies

It can be very difficult to tell a child about the death of a parent, brother or sister, close relative or friend. You may want to protect the child, or feel it is better they do not know the truth. Children are quick to notice when things are not right - silence will just bewilder and frighten them more. They need to be told about the death in simple terms, so that they can begin to grapple with the implications. They will then continue to trust you as someone they can turn to.

It is important for a child to feel that there are adults, who are strong enough to bear whatever they wish to talk about and to answer their questions.

Children's responses to death

Children have different responses to death and dying depending on their age and experience. There are no clear cut stages, no correct order, no set time for grief, so try not to think about a 'right way to grieve'. It is important that children are allowed to grieve in their own way and in their own time. They may switch between laughter and tears very quickly, they may become very insecure and need a lot of reassurance, and they may start acting like a much younger child. Adolescents may seek out the support of their friends, whilst younger children are more likely to turn to their parent, grandparents, family friend or other significant people in their lives.

How schools can help

Schools are extremely important in helping the child to cope with bereavement. Ask your child if and how they want their class to be informed of the death. Older children often want as few people as possible to know, Younger children may want their class to be informed. Then talk with the head teacher in the primary school or head of year in the secondary school about the bereavement.

It often helps if a person is designated at the school for the child to talk to whenever they need to - the child should help choose who that person is. Often they may only need five minutes of their time, but it saves problems building up in the future.

How can Jigsaw4u help?

We can provide:

- Advice and support to families and professionals on the phone.
- An initial meeting in the family home, at Jigsaw4u or at school.
- Seven weekly support groups, where parents, children and young people can meet others in similar situations, and share experiences and feelings. These groups are divided into under tens, over tens and parent groups.
- A weekend where there is time to talk, grieve and celebrate the life of the person who has died and to form new relationships with other families and have fun.
- A 'Buddy' scheme to help the families achieve these aims.
- Training for schools and professionals to help bereaved families
- On going support for parents, children and young people
- Quarterly events for all the family.
- Magazine for children and families – also sent to professionals

How you can help us

1. Would you be interested in doing something really useful, personally rewarding and also fun? Could you become a Buddy to a child or young person who has suffered the death of someone close to them? You would be offered training and ongoing support and work together with trained staff. Please phone us or complete the form enclosed if you would like more details.
2. We need to raise £100K to support and develop the grief support.
 - You can help by gift aiding, a government scheme that enables us to reclaim the tax on your donation
 - You could encourage you employer to sponsor Jigsaw4u or to enable employee giving
 - You could join our fundraising committee and get involve in fun events

How to contact us for help?

Anyone can ask us for help - parents, children, schools, GPs, school nurses etc. Just phone us on 8687 1384, ask for a referral form or complete the form enclosed.

Anne Davies (Chief Executive)
May 2004