

Counselling gives children the opportunity to explore their thoughts, feelings and learn that the way they are feeling is 'OK', and normal and that other children / young people have had similar experiences.

Walsall
Bereavement
Support
Service



THE SWING

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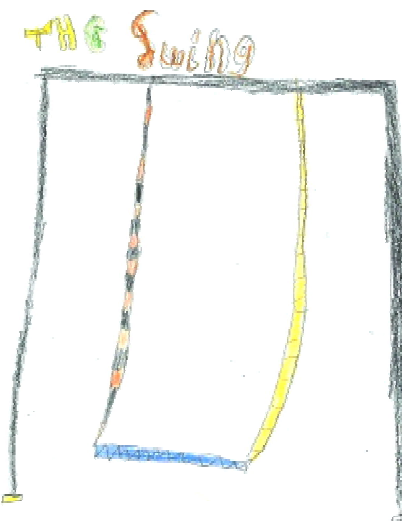
www.wbss.org.uk

Registered Charity No: 1092770

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THE SWING



Bereavement Support for
Children, Young People and Families
Service Information

THE SWING

Welcome to our Service Information Booklet

Walsall Bereavement Support Service is a registered charity, we offer caring and sensitive support to bereaved children, young people and adults from the borough of Walsall.

THE SWING is the name given to the Children's and Young Peoples bereavement service.

If you are a user of the service, Walsall Bereavement Support Service, will need to hold certain information about you and your child/ren in order to let you know about new services, keep a record of the services used and to care for you and/or your child in the best and most appropriate manner.

We hope that this booklet will provide the answers to questions you may have about what information we need to keep about you, why and how we keep it and about who has access to it. It also explains about our confidentiality and child protection procedures.

However if you have any other questions, comments or complaints about the service you receive from **THE SWING** please contact:

Children's and Young Peoples Bereavement Service coordinator
THE SWING

Walsall Bereavement Support Service
Globe House
3 Bradford Place,
Walsall
WS1 1PL
Telephone: 01922 645035

Child Protection Statement

What is Child Protection?

We recognise that most children/young people grow up in families where they are loved and well cared for. However this is not the case for all children/young people some of whom may suffer from physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect. Child Protection is when an agency or individual sets out to protect children/young people from harm.

Why do we protect children/young people?

Children have a right to be protected and in these matters the safety and best interest of the child must come first.

How do we protect children/young people?

We follow the procedures as laid down by our Child Protection Policy. This means that if anyone believes a child/young person is being harmed or is at risk of being harmed they should inform and discuss the issue with the appropriate member of staff. They will then jointly decide what action to take. It is important to note that this is how we all can protect children/young people and it is not a way of getting a person into trouble.

Who is involved with a Child Protection incident?

Anyone who has concern about any child/young person should discuss the issue with a member of the team.

Will confidentiality be observed?

Information on a child/young person will only be shared with those people who need to know or who are involved in protecting the child/young person.

What would happen next?

If you are involved in any type of child protection process we aim to ensure that help and support would be available for you and your family.

Confidentiality Guidelines

It is important for you to understand our confidentiality guidelines, and what will happen to information you give us.

What will be confidential?

All information that you share with us is confidential between you and the team.

When will confidentiality not be observed?

We want you to feel safe discussing your situation with us. However, there may be circumstance where we have to share information with other professional agencies e.g. in the case of Child Protection concern.

This should be:-

1. Where we consider that you, your child, or anyone else are in a life threatening situation.
2. Where we consider keeping information to ourselves puts you, your child or anyone else at risk of harm.
3. The issue will be discussed with you and you will be informed of the action that we take. Where possible the project would continue to offer support to you during this process.

If there is anything you are not happy with or something you do not understand please speak to a member of the team.

What Happens During Counselling Sessions

The aim of the counselling is to allow the children/young people to express themselves without any worry that what they might be saying, thinking or feeling is 'wrong'.

If children ask questions the counsellor/support worker will answer honestly and in an appropriate way. This might seem extreme to some parent/carer's but in the longer term children have reported that they were glad this happened.

In individual counselling the child will normally work alone with a counsellor. Sessions are for approximately one hour; group work may be longer. Together they will explore the feelings and issues that the young people may wish to share. This may be done in a variety of ways, which may include painting, drawing, writing and playing games.

During group work the child will meet with other children of a similar age who have also been bereaved, although not necessarily in the same circumstances. Brief records are kept of each session. All sessions are confidential between the child and the counsellor/support worker but on a very rare occasion it may be necessary to break confidentiality for the wellbeing of the child/young person.

Children and young people have a right to confidentiality and feedback from us to parents/ carers will only be with the child's consent and usually whilst they are present. However, we will encourage the child/young person to share with their parent/carer what has gone on in the session and also any difficulties that they might be experiencing.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Grief might happen a long time after the death and manifest itself in many different ways. Confused by the events and the changes occurring, a child will sometimes take on the anxiety of the people they live with. They might feel that they want to protect the adults from further distress and may do this by not asking questions about the death or talking about their own issues.

Open Access and Data Protection Guidelines

What is Open Access?

The 1998 Data Protection Act defines your rights as an individual regarding the information held about you, and how it can be used.

We have an Open Access Policy which means that we aim to work openly and honestly with you. Any information that we may record about you is always available for you to see.

What information do we keep about you?

We keep a record of the following information:-

1. Referral and Assessment Forms: including name, address and telephone number
2. Brief information about your bereavement loss and circumstances
3. Medical and behavioural information which is important for us to know about
4. Your signature giving your permission for your child to attend.*
5. Permission for us to act in an emergency.
6. Sessional notes and work that your child may choose to leave with us.

Why do we keep this information?

We need this information so that we can:-

1. Maintain contact with you whilst you are using our services.
2. Work within ethical and professional guidelines
3. Care for your child in the best and most appropriate manner.
4. Let you know about new services the Project is offering
5. Keep a record of the services you are using.

Who has access to the information?

1. You can have access to any information that you give us or that the project records about you.
2. Project staff because we work as a team.
3. If anyone else wants to see the information we will seek your permission first.

How do we store the information about you?

All information is stored in a filing cabinet and a secure database which is only accessible to the Project staff.

How can I see the information you keep about me?

Speak to a member of the team. Your request will be responded to as quickly as possible. However, as parent of your child you do not automatically have access to your child's records, consent from the child may be necessary.

What if I am not happy with the information you have kept about me?

Discuss this with a member of the team, this may result in the information being altered or deleted.

*In some circumstances if the child is deemed competent parental consent may not be necessary.