

# Bereavement Memory Day

## Information Sheet for families



### About Memory Days

Following a bereavement, one of the things that children and young people tell us is that they find it really helpful to meet others who have gone through a similar experience to them.

In order to make this happen we run special days called Memory Days. These are days where we invite children, young people and their parent/carers to come together to do activities and meet others.

They are days where it is OK to have fun and its OK to laugh or cry.



### What happens?

The Memory Day provides a safe and caring environment where children and young people have time and space to express and understand their thoughts and feelings and to:

- Be listened to and understood
- Meet with other children and young people who have also been bereaved
- Have permission to grieve, but also to have fun
- Find coping strategies and build their resilience
- Hold onto their memories.

The day is filled with activities that help to remember the person and to explore some of the feelings that people have when someone dies.

Dependant upon numbers, the activities will take place in small groups where children and young people will be with others of their own age, parents and carers will also have their own group. At the end of this sheet is an example of the types of things we will do on the day.

Children and young people will be encouraged to share their experiences and may find that as they get to know the others they feel more ready to talk. But there will be absolutely no pressure from anyone, at any time, to do or say anything they are not comfortable with. This goes for the parents/carers too.

It will be run by Balloons staff and volunteers who are trained in Grief Support and safeguarding. All of the adults are kind and caring, and they are good listeners.

### Who is it for?

Children and young people aged 5-18 who have experienced a bereavement and their parent/carer(s), who wish to explore their grief in a group setting. Our referral criteria is at the end of this information sheet.

### When and where is it?

Our next day is on Sunday 19th May and will run from 10am – 3pm. It will be held at Newcourt Community Centre where Balloons have the whole building and garden for the day. It is 5 minutes from J30 of the M5 and there is plenty of space for parking. It is also accessible by train, with Newcourt station 200 yards away. The J and I busses also stop right outside.

## How much does it cost?

There is no charge. We will provide refreshments and snacks but ask that you bring lunch with you. There is also a convenience store across the road from the venue.

## Want to attend the day?

If you would like to attend the Bereavement Memory Day, please read through the criteria below and complete the attached family information form and return to [support@balloonscharity.co.uk](mailto:support@balloonscharity.co.uk) as soon as possible and, at latest, by the 3rd May 2024.

We will then arrange to meet virtually with you to help you understand what a Memory Day will be like and what to expect to make sure it is right for you. This will give you and your child(ren) the chance to ask any questions you may have. Our aim is to make you feel comfortable and ready to attend a Memory Day as this will help you get the most out of your time.

### Our criteria for attending a Bereavement Memory Day

They are for Children and Young People with their parent/carer(s):

- Who are between the ages of 5 – 18
- Who wish to explore their grief (In order to help the child/young person to decide if they do want this group grief support, you might want to share the description of what it is as set out in this information sheet, so that they can make an informed decision)
- Who want to meet others who have also experienced a bereavement
- Who are happy and able to participate in group activities\*\*\*.
- Who have a parent/carer who is able to come with them who is also open to exploring their grief and meeting others in a similar situation

\*\*\*Alternatively, if you would like to know more about our one-to-one grief support service, please contact us about the criteria and current waiting times.

In addition:

- At least 12 weeks need to have passed since the bereavement
- Children and young people need to have been told the cause of death. In saying this we do not mean that children need to be given every little detail, but we cannot work with children where they are not aware of key information such as that the death is a result of suicide. We know this can be hard and we are always happy to talk about this further.
- We are unable to accept referrals where there is an inquest pending on the cause of death. It is an important part of our work that children and young people know the cause of death, and therefore if this is still uncertain we will need to wait until this has been concluded to take the referral.
- If the trauma surrounding the bereavement is so significant, such as if the child or young person has witnessed the death or discovered the body, Balloons might not be the right service. In these circumstances, a trauma specialist service might be more appropriate - we are always happy to discuss this further

# Plan for the day

## 10am Welcome and refreshments

### Groups and activities

Children and young people - getting together in age groups with the following types of activity:

- Getting to know you games/activities
- Storybook work - a chance to talk, draw or write about your loved one
- Candle ceremony - coming together to remember your person

Parents/carers group - how to support your child(ren). Opportunity to meet others for discussion and sharing

## Lunch

### Creative carousel

Feelings and memories

The afternoon will be filled with a range of choices of different activities to give children and young people an opportunity to explore feelings and memories. Everyone will have the opportunity to make something to take away. Parents/carers will also be able to join in this.

## 3pm Goodbyes



Please note, throughout the whole day, our experienced staff and volunteers will be on hand if anyone attending needs some space or extra support