

# FAMILY BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Social Work Department

## NEWSLETTER JULY 2021



As everyone is aware, the COVID-19 virus has prevented us from having face-to-face bereavement groups. We have been offering zoom groups as an alternative. We had been hopeful that we could return to face-to-face groups this year but unfortunately the ongoing outbreaks and subsequent lockdowns have meant that this has not been possible.

The zoom groups do have a different feel to them and do not offer the same opportunity for informal social connection but have been appreciated by those who have attended and they have advantages for those who find it difficult to get to an onsite group at RCH. We have had 2 occasions when the group did not go ahead due to insufficient numbers including the July group. A fairly frequent attender of the zoom groups has written the email below to describe her experience of this group format:

Dear bereaved parents,

We are all in this group that none of us want to be in - 'bereaved parents'. I have been a bereaved parent for 9 years now as I lost my daughter in May 2012. I know Covid has really thrown a spanner in the works for all of us in various ways, especially being able to meet at the hospital for the bereavement groups each month.

I have joined the zoom bereavement groups since about March this year and I actually look forward to them.

It is a safe place, we get to talk about our children who are no longer with us, we get to cry, we get to be with parents like us who have lost a child.

I do enjoy being a participant in these groups each month and listening to other parents navigating their grief, the hardships we face, the milestones that

we don't have anymore, the special days and anniversaries and birthdays that we have to endure without our precious child, our relationships with people who we find supportive and who we don't.

I encourage you to join these monthly groups on zoom so we can all come together and share how we are coping, how we move forward and how we deal with this horrendous thing we need to live with - not having our child around anymore.

I look forward to hearing your story about your child and I look forward to sharing my experiences with grief with you next month in August.

regards,

Lind regards  
Kelly



Given that we are all still navigating using on line formats for various things we once did face-to-face I would like to use the August group to discuss how this format can best be used to support you all as you live with the loss of your child. I would like to explore with you topics you would like to discuss, and different format of the group you would find helpful etc. Please come along with ideas to discuss – there will still be the opportunity to talk about all the things that Kelly has suggested and anything else you would like to share about your experiences.

**The next group is August 19<sup>th</sup> at 7.30 PM.**

If you would like to attend please let us know and we will send you the link to the meeting. If you have ideas you wish to share but cannot attend the group we would welcome and suggestions by email or you could call on 9345 6111 and ask to speak to Helen Stewart or Robyn Clark.



## *Our letter box is Waiting!*



Contributions such as responses and reflections on the groups' themes, poems, letters, songs, reviews of books that you may have found helpful, quotations from parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters and friends, feedback about this newsletter are most welcome. Share your thoughts, experiences, questions with others who are bereaved. Please forward them to:

Family Bereavement Support Programme  
Social Work Department  
Royal Children's Hospital  
50 Flemington Road  
PARKVILLE VIC 3052  
Phone: 03 9345 6111  
Or email: [Bereavement.Services@rch.org.au](mailto:Bereavement.Services@rch.org.au)

The next meeting of the  
Family Bereavement Support Evening Group (Via Zoom)

**Thursday 19th August 2021 at 7.30pm**

If you wish to attend this group please  
email: [Bereavement.Services@rch.org.au](mailto:Bereavement.Services@rch.org.au)



Please join us in August

The newsletter is always a team effort.  
Thank you to Helen Stewart for facilitating the group discussion and  
Also to Marina Puljic for ensuring the  
newsletter is typed, formatted, collated and distributed to interested people

**Social Work Department, RCH**

