

A Picture Paints A Thousand Words



Children do not always use words to describe their feelings.

Expressive therapies provide an opportunity to work through their emotions in a safe way and can be a powerful healing agent for a grieving child.

These therapies are offered through the following creative mediums and activities:

- Painting & Drawing
- Clay
- Sand Tray
- Telling their story
- Puppets
- Play



Nanaimo Community Hospice Our Vision:

At Hospice we believe that dying, caregiving, and grieving are three of life's greatest challenges. Our Vision is that the dying will experience dignity and peace; their caregivers will receive the help they need; and their families and friends will be supported in their grief.

Grief Support for Children

***Thank You
for supporting Hospice!
The generosity of our
community enables us to offer
our support and programs at
no cost to the participants***

Nanaimo Community Hospice Society (A United Way Agency)

1080 St. George Crescent
Nanaimo, B.C. V9S 1X1
Tel: (250) 591-8811
Fax: (250)591-1858

info@nanaimohospice.com
www.nanaimohospice.com

Grief Support for Children



NANAIMO COMMUNITY
HOSPICE

Caring • Commitment • Compassion

Grief Support for Children

A program that honors the unique ways that children express their grief. As each session unfolds, the children show us what they need by choosing whatever medium feels most comfortable to them.



If children are old enough to love, they are old enough to grieve.

Children grieve in 'waves'. The intensity, duration and frequency of these waves are neither linear nor predictable.

Children instinctively switch their focus to play, when they become overwhelmed with intense thoughts or feelings, as a way of regulating their emotions.

This can lead to adults thinking that they are not grieving. It can be helpful to remember that grieving is the internal process, whereas mourning is the externalizing of that process.

A child's grief may be expressed in a variety of ways including:

- through their five senses
- their actions or behaviours
- symbolic & creative play

As with adults, the emotions that are experienced by children in grief may include sadness, frustration, anger, guilt, loneliness, vulnerability, or even relief. It is important to remember that children also experience long periods of happiness as well.

For children, play and other expressive activities are comfortable and familiar. They are often some of the best ways to support them in organizing and expressing the chaotic and conflicting emotions of grief.

Working with clay helps release some of the feelings of anger that arise around the death or dying of a loved one. This can prevent it from being stored in the body only to come out later in some inappropriate or unhealthy way.

Miniature figures and objects can be used to create a 3D picture or world in the sand tray. The particular choice of a miniature is guided by an innate wisdom that we all have, allowing an expression of what is on the inside to come out.

For children, a picture paints a thousand words and actions speak louder than words.

Hospice offers a safe, comfortable, and non-judgemental place that is designed for children and is ideal for self-exploration and understanding.

Our goal is to normalise the pain that is a natural part of the grief process.

Staff provide a supportive witness and guide as the children acquire *the tools they need to live with the death of a loved one.*

“The greatest gift you can give your children is not protection from change, loss, pain or stress, but the confidence and tools to cope and grow with all that life has to offer them.”

(Wendy Harpham 1998)