SUPPORTING CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH CHANGE, LOSS AND GRIEF: AN EVALUATION OF THE ‘SEASONS FOR GROWTH PROGRAM’

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Experiences of change, loss and grief feature significantly in the lives of many children and young people; for example, almost one-third of Australians experience loss as a result of divorce, separation or death before turning 18 years of age. Developed in 1996, Seasons for Growth (SfG) is a group-based loss and grief education program which aims to promote the social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people experiencing significant change in their lives, usually as a result of death, separation or divorce. By 2010, over 150,000 children and young people, across five countries, had participated in SfG groups.

The CCYP collaborated with Good Grief Australia and young participants to conduct an evaluation of the SfG program. The aim of the evaluation was to refine Good Grief’s existing tools for evaluating the program and, subsequently, to use these to conduct a larger-scale evaluation of the SfG program. The final evaluation involved 57 SfG groups across three countries, and, to the best of our knowledge, represented the first, larger-scale, Australian-based evaluation of a grief and loss program for children and young people.

The evaluation concluded that the SfG program addresses a significant area of need which can have long-term impacts on mental health and social and emotional wellbeing throughout the lifespan. The overwhelmingly positive feedback, from all stakeholders, suggests that the SfG program is a particularly acceptable, appropriate and cost-effective way of addressing this need, especially among primary school-aged children.

PROJECT TIMEFRAME

February 2010 – May 2011

PROJECT PARTNER

Good Grief (Australia) Ltd

RESEARCH TEAM

Dr Sallie Newell

Alison Moss (Research assistant)

This evaluation was funded by Good Grief with additional funding support from Southern Cross University's Collaborative Research Grants Scheme.