

Seasons for Growth

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROGRAMME



Seasons for Growth®

An innovative grief and loss programme that uses the imagery of the seasons to illustrate the experience of grief.

The programme was first developed 20 years ago and has been revised and updated to incorporate new evidence and ensure that it continues to provide relevant and valuable experience for participants.

It does not provide counselling or therapy.



Notre Dame Centre

What does it do?

Seasons for Growth aims to strengthen the social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people (aged 6-18) who are dealing with significant life changes by:

- Exploring the impact of the change and loss on everyday life
- Learning new ways to respond to these changes

Who is it for?

Anyone who is living with the effects of change and loss. Many factors can cause change such as:

- Friends can come and go
- Loss of someone or something you love
- Parents and families separate
- Moving to a new place
- Impact of illness
- Family work-life changes

Change affects everyone differently, as does grief. It's the impact of the change, not the event itself that *Seasons for Growth* focuses on.

We suggest that anyone affected by bereavement talks to a Companion before participating in a *Seasons for Growth* programme.

How does it work?

Seasons for Growth is a small group programme that combines psychology and education with peer support, within a person centred learning approach. It uses the metaphor of the seasons to explore the cyclic nature of grief, and is underpinned by William Worden's tasks of grieving. The Children and Young People's programme contains developmentally appropriate discussions and activities. *Seasons for Growth* normalises participants' experiences, and can increase protective factors (including building personal resilience and social skills) while minimising some risk factors (including isolation) that influence mental health and wellbeing. The programme also supports the development of communication, decision making and problem solving skills.

How is it delivered?

The programme is run over 8 sessions with small groups of 4-7 participants and is facilitated by trained adult "Companions". The participants are provided with a safe space to learn, share and reflect and are supported by richly illustrated participant journals. Companions may be school staff, agency staff, endorsed parent volunteers or other suitable adults who have undertaken a two-day training workshop and receive a subsequent accreditation from *Seasons for Growth* to deliver the programme.

Outcomes

Seasons for Growth provides the support and space for children and young people to:

- **Learn** about how different people respond to change, loss and grief
- **Understand** that it is normal to experience a range of grief reactions
- **Explore** new approaches to dealing with change, loss and grief in their lives
- **Build** communication, decision making and problem solving skills
- **Participate** in a supportive network of peers and adults
- **Integrate** their new learning into their relationships with family, friends and others

Evidence

Seasons for Growth has been evaluated extensively over the last 15 years. The most recent evaluation was conducted by Southern Cross University in 2010 and concluded that the *Seasons for Growth* Programme:

- Builds understanding and skills
- Improves participants' emotional wellbeing
- Enables participants to express their views, thoughts and feelings
- Strengthens participants' social and support networks.

The complete Southern Cross University Evaluation is available at www.goodgrief.org.au/research

For more information



Seasons for Growth

ADULT PROGRAMME



An innovative Australian grief and loss education programme that uses the imagery of the seasons to illustrate the experience of grief.

It does not provide counselling or therapy.



Notre Dame Centre

What does it do?

Seasons for Growth aims to strengthen the social and emotional wellbeing of adults who are dealing with significant life changes by:

- Exploring the impact of the change and loss on everyday life
- Learning new ways to respond to these changes

Who is it for?

Anyone who is living with the effects of change and loss. Many factors can cause change such as:

- Friends can come and go
- Loss of someone or something you love
- Parents and families separate
- Moving to a new place
- Impact of illness
- Family work-life changes

Change affects everyone differently, as does grief. It's the impact of the change, not the event itself that *Seasons for Growth* focuses on.

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How does it work?

Seasons for Growth is a small group programme that combines psychology and education with peer support, within a person centred learning approach. It uses the metaphor of the seasons to explore the cyclic nature of grief, and is underpinned by William Worden's tasks of grieving.

Seasons for Growth normalises participants' experiences, and can increase protective factors (including building personal resilience and social skills) while minimising some risk factors (including isolation) that influence mental health and wellbeing. The programme also supports the development of communication, decision making and problem solving skills.

How is it delivered?

Run over 4-8 sessions, *Exploring the Seasons of Grief* is a small group (4-7 participants) grief and loss programme.

The *Understanding Change, Loss and Grief* 3 hours Seminar is designed for use in a wide variety of contexts with up to 25 participants, where groups and individuals are seeking to deepen their general understanding of change, loss and grief.

Trained 'Companions' facilitate either/both elements of the *Seasons for Growth* adult programme. Companions may be agency staff, endorsed volunteers or other suitable adults who undertake a two-day training workshop and subsequent accreditation with *Seasons for Growth*.

Outcomes

Seasons for Growth provides the support and space to:

- **Learn** about how different people respond to change, loss and grief
- **Understand** that it is normal to experience a range of grief reactions
- **Explore** new approaches to dealing with change, loss and grief in their lives
- **Build** communication, decision making and problem solving skills
- **Participate** in a supportive network of peers and adults
- **Integrate** their new learning into their relationships with family, friends and others

Evidence

Seasons for Growth has been evaluation on a number of occasions with the following conclusions:

The University of Melbourne, 2005

"Reduces participants' isolation and develops their concern for other people"

Department of Health and Ageing, 2008

"The content and structure of the programme is professional, well designed and well executed to deliver fundamental and positive change."

University of Central Queensland, 2008

"The systematic progression through the programme was therapeutic... individuals felt more in control of their own lives and their responses to situations, thus building resilience."

Mental Health Association NSW, 2010

"Participants achieved increased knowledge, skills and understanding about change, loss and grief and tools to help manage both current and past issues."

For more information

