



Memories and me

Information for parents and carers

Hamish & Milo is a programme which gives children the opportunity to be involved in a range of activities about a particular theme of emotional wellbeing as part of a small group. We are delighted to be able to welcome your child to the group.

In this theme, we look at loss. We're acutely aware that this is a very sensitive and personal experience yet it's something we all sadly experience in our lives. It can be hard to know what to say and we can worry if we should say anything at all. When we do it can be difficult to know how best to have conversations that help our children make sense of their experiences, particularly with loss, so that they're able to heal through their feelings safely.

We recognise that whether your child is involved in this theme with a small group or individually with an empathic

adult, it's crucial that parents and carers are involved. It's important to consider when might be the best time for this intervention and we encourage you to speak with a pastoral team member.

Sometimes, group work is preferable when a child is ready to explore themes with a few peers, in a small and safely contained group. This is always with an empathic adult to help them make sense of their feelings, share experiences safely and acknowledge memories. Their wellbeing is, of course, at the centre of any focus around loss.

As part of the 'Memories and me' group, your child will be involved in 10 weekly sessions.

These engaging and practical activity sessions will help children understand the different types of loss we experience and the range of feelings within that. Depending on what is agreed as the best approach, we'll focus on different loss experiences and they'll be able to reflect on special memories.

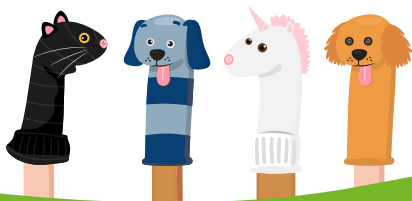
Helping your child

We aim to work alongside you. We know you understand your child best and we recognise how important it is to listen and value what you and your child feel is right for them. It can be helpful for children to talk to their peers or a safe and trusted adult outside of the family, too.



We would encourage you to

- ✔ **Look after yourselves** - if you too are coping with loss.
- ✔ **Use simple, clear words** - explain the situation truthfully in age-appropriate language. Be direct, clear and sensitive, e.g. 'died' or 'left home' in situations such as bereavement, divorce or separation to prevent any confusion.
- ✔ **Listen and comfort** - encourage your child to talk and express their feelings.
- ✔ **Put emotions into words** - encourage your child to release their feelings by crying and to name the feelings they are having.



Sock puppets

An expressive, interactive and hands-on way to engage

For each of the sessions, we use sock puppets to help the children talk about and share their feelings. Your child will make their own sock puppet to use in each session as part of this group.

You may like to make one at home too as a way of helping your child to talk about their feelings or just for fun! Sometimes it's easier for them to tell you what they're thinking about through describing the puppet's feelings or situations.

- ✔ **Explain what to expect** - if the loss means changes in your child's daily life, reduce fears by explaining what will happen in the near future.
- ✔ **Reassure your child** - that all these feelings are normal and can be confusing. They may feel sad, upset, numb, angry, confused and hurt. All of these feelings are real and eventually will change, fade or pass.
- ✔ **Respond with reassurance** - notice if your child seems more worried, sad, or is having trouble sleeping etc. and provide the extra comfort your child needs.
- ✔ **Help your child to remember** - talk and share special memories. Encourage your child to draw pictures or write down favourite memories.

There are many helpful websites and resources. Here are a just a few:

www.childbereavementuk.org
www.place2be.org.uk
www.winstonswish.org.uk
www.youngminds.org.uk/bereavement
www.griefuk.org



The children will also receive their own journal to reflect on the sessions as they move through the programme, 'reward' stickers and a certificate!

Here we outline all the programme activities, along with suggestions of what you might like to do or say to support your child at home.

Session and overview	Ways to help
Session 1: My special people streamers Celebrating a person who is special and who cares and helps us.	Talk to your child about who they go to for reassurance at school or when not at home and who in their family is there for them.
Session 2: Feelings of loss Understanding the range of feelings we can experience.	Encourage your child to put words to sensations as well as feelings, e.g. numb, heartbroken, sad, angry, loss, hurt.
Session 3: Invisible string A comforting way to know who we are connected to, even when we might not be physically with them.	A book we recommend is <i>The Invisible String</i> by Patricia Kurtz or ask your child to tell you about the story.
Session 4: Cycles of grief Shows the stages we go through in the healing journey of loss.	Help your child recognise that feelings change and won't stay the same. Having a range of different and even conflicting or confusing feelings is normal.
Session 5: Words of comfort tree What to say and how to offer comfort.	Help to give your child the message that it is important to talk about feelings and to be able to release them. Crying is a good way of letting feelings out so they don't stay inside and make us unwell.
Session 6: A jar of memories Making sand jars that represent special times.	Talk to your child and perhaps they can show you and talk to you about their jar of memories of someone special.
Session 7: In words and pictures A chance to write an unwritten letter, a song or a poem.	Encourage your child to share or talk to you about their thoughts and feelings but also allow them privacy and self-reflection time.
Session 8: Memory boxes Creation of a decorated box of special things, such as photos, pictures, tickets, mementoes.	Your child could bring their box home and may like to share it or keep it somewhere safe at home.
Session 9: Tibetan bunting flags Messages written on flags and flying in the wind.	Talk to your child about their experience in the group and the Tibetan tradition of writing messages on prayer flags as a tribute and release.
Session 10: Fiesta of life Celebration of special people and memories.	Ask your child to share what they know about the celebration of life. Perhaps watch the Disney film 'Coco' together.

If you feel worried about your child and their wellbeing, talk to someone at school so that you can share ideas.



Sensation & Emotion Cards

These cards are a great way to help children put language to sensations and emotions, to help regulate their feelings and increase self-confidence. Our unique cards consist of 60 different emotions, guidance and 20 activities.



Hamish & Milo Pals

Our Hamish and Milo Pals are precious cuddly friends that help children to feel comforted, cared about and listened to. Perfect to snuggle and they are great fun too.

Find out more at hamishandmilo.org

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