

EARLY INTERVENTION

Children experiencing grief are at much higher risk for serious mental health problems including substance abuse, physical abuse and other destructive behaviors. Untreated problems of childhood can become problems in adulthood and often become problems of society.

Early intervention is the key to providing healthy coping and to preparing children to meet the challenges of life in a constructive way.

Hunterdon Hospice offers a bereavement support and education program for children and teenagers and their parents. The goal is to help children and parents begin to move through the grief process.

THE CREATIVE ARTS THERAPY MODEL

Hunterdon Hospice is sensitive to the differences in a child's response to death and loss. The Creative Arts Therapy Model seeks to teach children healthy coping skills and a common language of grief.

In the Creative Arts Therapy Program, children learn through play. Professional facilitators, volunteers and a certified art therapist provide twelve weeks of clinical interventions based on creative art therapy models. These include:

- Mask making
- Music
- Art work
- Therapeutic games
- Poetry
- Rituals for remembering

CHILDREN LEARN FROM THEIR PEERS

Children are assigned to groups based on developmental age. Being with peers who have had similar experiences normalizes the grief process. Through this interaction, children learn to empathize with others, which can give them insight into their own pain. Experiencing other children's expressions of grief may also help them to openly express their own grief.

FOR THE PARENTS

Parents attend a companion parents' group where they learn about their children's perception of loss, and developmental adjustments to grief. Parents will also receive suggestions and support for coping with their own grief.

Using Creative Art Therapy

- Realize that there are many feelings associated with grieving, and that it is acceptable to express either one or all of them.
- Feel comfortable in a safe environment where they can talk about their feelings. Experience some of their memories in a positive way.
- Create a positive self image.
- Use various methods to help them cope when they are feeling down or confused.
- Communicate their thoughts and feelings to the important people in their lives.
- Recognize that living goes on despite the grief caused by death.

These masks were made by children during our 2005 program.



ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Youth Bereavement Program:

- Accepts school age children ages 5-18 who have experienced the loss of a loved one.
- Is staffed by professional therapists and counselors.
- Offers twelve weekly sessions of creative group therapy bereavement interventions geared to specific age groups.
- Offers a parent/guardian group for education and sharing.
- Accepts referrals from parents, teachers, physicians, social workers, and other community or individual resources.
- Has a nominal registration fee.

The Youth Bereavement Program is supported by generous donations from businesses and private individuals.

Contributions of any kind are always appreciated.

If you are interested in learning more, contributing, or enrolling a child in this

program, please contact Hunterdon Hospice

at 908-788-6600.

HUNTERDON HOSPICE

Hunterdon Hospice was established in 1979

to meet the needs of the terminally ill in

Hunterdon County. Hospice provides a program

of multi-disciplinary services which address the

physical, psychosocial and spiritual needs of

patients and their families.

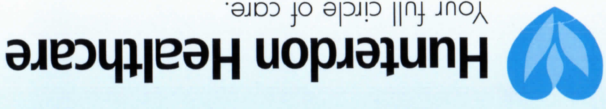
The focus is on promoting and enhancing quality

of life and dignity at the end of life.

Hunterdon Hospice is accredited by the Joint

Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare

Organizations.



Hunterdon Hospice

Your full circle of care.

Visit HunterdonHospice.org

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Youth Bereavement Program

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