

EHCP Services



Effective
Helpful
Caring
Personal
Services.

EHCP Services
Contact details:
ehcpservices@gmail.com
ehcpservices.com
07976512506

This is not a nice article to write and it is not intended to replace professional advice. It is a collection of tips and strategies I have developed over the years as I have worked with children and young people. I have permission from the children and parents to share their ideas.

I work with lots of lovely children one to one with building their confidence in learning skills and I have the pleasure of talking to them about the important issues in their lives. I have worked with a young boy for two years and around the same time of year (November) I noticed a change in his behaviour. It transpired that his dog died and he was 'stuck with his hard feelings', some of the examples are his ideas following the memory the school counselor suggested he made. The other children involved in this conversation have experienced bereavement of pets, ballet teachers and other people in their lives that were important to them. Over a period of months my student (let's call him Sam) developed his confidence in talking about his 'hard feelings' and used his ideas to help some else in his friendship group. I facilitated this conversation and the ideas they discussed have been shared with you. All the ideas shared with you below are the children's.

EHCP Services



Effective
Helpful
Caring
Personal
Services.

EHCP Services
Contact details:
ehcpservices@gmail.com
ehcpservices.com
07976512506

I have noticed that these changes in behaviour can indicate a child is grieving; difficulty in concentrating, sleeping, clinginess, anxiety or feeling abandoned, developmental regression, changes in behaviour or play and feelings of guilt.

Your child could be doing these because everything is different, they are growing up or a million other reasons. I noticed a change in behaviour in Sam which at the time seemed to appear all of a sudden, but, actually on reflection had happened over a longer time and I was only just noticing it. Like I said there were a million reasons at the time for the change in behaviour and after two years I spotted a pattern.

However, while we are living through this period of change there are a couple of things that might help you prepare your child for any bereavements because someone has died or everything is different and it is too hard to explain.

There are five stages of grief and there are **no rules for when they appear or in which order**. These are denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Children around the age of 9 or 10 understand death as something which is an ending. Before that age, children will talk about and might have experienced it when a pet dies and might not understand the process.

EHCP Services



Effective
Helpful
Caring
Personal
Services.

EHCP Services
Contact details:
ehcpservices@gmail.com
ehcpservices.com
07976512506

So what do I suggest you do to prepare your child for bereavement? The estimated deaths from COVID-19 are complex to calculate and based on models which collect data from different sources. The children and young people I am working with have asked me how many people will die and

should they be worried about them (or someone they love dying). This is a really difficult question to answer but important to answer. My top tips? Be honest, explain in words your child will understand that some people might die and we have to follow the rules of staying indoor to help stop the spread of the virus.

If your family experiences bereavement, a pet dog, cat or spider then it is important to help your child express their feelings and voice them. You can help by naming the feeling, this acknowledges it and helps your child to learn about their feelings. You can make a memory book, draw pictures and make a treasure box of precious things. These can help the child to come to terms with death. Once your child has started the process of grieving they can find themselves feeling stuck with a feeling and not knowing what to do with it. This is when it is important to listen to them and help them move onto the next stage of grieving. This strategy is used in schools and there are many websites that suggest how to achieve this.

EHCP Services



Effective
Helpful
Caring
Personal
Services.

EHCP Services
Contact details:
ehcpservices@gmail.com
ehcpservices.com
07976512506

I have included some interviews and written pieces which have been written by some children (aged 8-10) which might help you understand bereavement from a child's perspective.

These children were asked to write a short piece on 'hard feelings'. They were given no other instructions and this is what they produced. 'Hard feelings' is the term they used to describe these feelings.

This is a personal account of an eight year boy talking about the death of his dog over two years ago.

EHCP Services



Effective
Helpful
Caring
Personal
Services.

EHCP Services
Contact details:
ehcpservices@gmail.com
ehcpservices.com
07976512506

'hard feelings. I feel down or sad because my dog died two years ago on the 18th of December 2018. When it is December I feel like all of the happiness has been drained out and will never come back.

I have had lots of help to understand these hard feelings, and I would like to share them with all the children that listen.

Here are the things I Sometimes feel:

1. Sad
2. angry
3. Confused
4. frustrated
5. livid for no reason
6. Pain full feelings.

All of the time I feel most of them. It's okay to feel like that and some people might think you are weird and different but you are not. I think these feelings get better over time but some times they are a lot worse.

When I feel like this I talk to my friends and this always makes you feel better like I said.

EHCP Services



Effective
Helpful
Caring
Personal
Services.

EHCP Services
Contact details:
ehcpservices@gmail.com
ehcpservices.com
07976512506

A section of an interview a group of children wrote. I have only included a section as after this there are some silly sounds and words to make the interview sound less 'serious'!

So have you ever had a hard feeling?
No, are they some thing like anger?
No, they are a though feeling you have like whe some one impotent to you do.
now here are some top tips!
1: taking about it should make you feel better
2: make a book about them.
3: tell storys about them
4: try think about them as much
as you can.

EHCP Services



Effective
Helpful
Caring
Personal
Services.

EHCP Services
Contact details:
ehcpservices@gmail.com
ehcpservices.com
07976512506

With my own and these children I have answered any questions they have asked me about who might die and if I could die. This time of change can create anxiety in children and adults alike so being honest about your feelings can teach children to describe and accept their feelings.

For our follow up work we will be planning how to prepare for these 'big feelings' so that Sam feels confident in expressing his thoughts. Radio four has a wealth of radio programmes that you can listen to and these as well as my own research and experience has formed these suggestions.