

Time4Me: Children's Bereavement Workbook

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'Time4Me' a FREE resource produced for bereaved children. 'Time4Me' is an interactive workbook to be used with children and an adult (family member, caregiver and/or therapist). It is designed to facilitate conversations around the death of a significant person in the child's life. The workbook is non-religious in its presentation; however, the space exists for children to explore or reflect their own conceptualisation of faith within their family context if it is relevant to their understanding.

Within a therapeutic context, albeit psychotherapeutic or psychosocial work, the practitioner is offered a framework of activities, which facilitates the child in defining their own perception of the loss. Using open questions and supporting prompts, the process enables the child to move at a pace that suits their level of development.

In these times of social distancing, proximity is now experienced through a video call. 'Time4Me' remains relevant within the context of TeleHealth by using audio-visual functions on tablets, smart mobile devices, etc. The approach adopted by Willis has been to work with children using 'Time4Me' as the *frame* for the conversation, with the child having access to an electronic version and a smartphone or tablet. Each page is used as a prompt through the process and encourages a relationship-based encounter.

An example of this approach, was where a bereaved 6'-year-old child was within a 20-day curfew (lockdown) period and a relative from the same household died. TeleHealth was used to engage the child. Printing the workbook was not possible; however, the child was invited to be an active participant in solving part of the present difficulty, to think about what else could be used as paper. The child chose to remove the inner packaging of a cornflakes box, then opened the sealed edges of the box to use the Inside as 'paper.' The child was then able to create and record responses to the workbook prompts on the blank Inside surface of the box. This was interesting because the child became a co-creator of his own narrative.

From a systemic perspective, if an adult or caregiver that is in regular contact with the child is also involved in the process via TeleHealth, then the person may act as an anchor for the child after the TeleHealth Session has ended. So, the child may continue conversations in a normalised manner. Equally, the adult may have their own levels of loss, especially within the COVID-19 period. They may experience elements of grief work by proxy through engaging with the child and the practitioner during the TeleHealth sessions. This offers healing space for the child but also invites resilience building in the adult through role modelling from the practitioner, i.e. the framing of words, containing the child's emotions, etc.

Psychotherapeutic and psychosocial approaches to supporting children for Willis is primarily a relationship-based process. The use of gestures, pace and tone of voice all offer an enriched interaction via TeleHealth that meets the child at their developmental stage. As like person-centred approaches, the practitioner is offering attentiveness underpinned with the core conditions acceptance, empathy and congruence, which transforms into a dynamic interaction that encourages the child to create their own grief narrative and meaning.