

## Peer Mentor Programme

The Peer mentor Programme works in Schools with young people to help them understand the impact of bereavement and loss.

Adolescence is frequently described as the "period of storm and stress" due to rapid biological, psychological and social changes in a young person's life. In addition bereaved children frequently feel isolated in their grief. Teachers and other professionals working with young people on a day to day basis generally do not receive any training on issues surrounding bereavement.

Children facing loss or separation in their lives also experience similar feelings to bereaved children, including isolation. An isolated child is a vulnerable child and so is frequently subjected to bullying. They may be held back in life by trauma and other difficult emotions as they are growing up. This can have a long term effect including low self esteem, mental health issues, violence, addiction to drink or drugs, educational disadvantage and dietary problems.

The mentor programme aims to cover issues of loss, separation and bereavement. Modules will help to raise awareness of emotional difficulties which arise in young people e.g. isolation, vulnerability and bullying. It will include practical ways of dealing with emotions such as anger. Students will explore how they might support a peer experiencing difficulties in a compassionate and enabling way.

The programme is delivered over six one hour sessions and can be done in a lunch break, after school or as part of the timetable, and is suitable for young people studying for a Child care

qualification, as part of PHSE or other interventions leading to a Peer Mentor Programme supported by Noah's Ark.

Quotes from teachers " They certainly became more aware of what grief and bereavement mean"

" They have a much better understanding of how people feel at this time and why they may react in a certain way".

Quotes from children " The activities were fun and relaxing"  
"I had never done this before but it was good"