

hcp|The Journey Program

Hospice of Central PA TLC - "Together, Laughing & Crying"

In a society where adults find it difficult to deal with death and loss, we at Hospice of Central PA find that children are often at an even greater disadvantage in finding ways to express their feelings of loss and grief, especially since their verbal abilities are not as developed. As a result, we have designed a support group for school aged children (K-12) which can give them a safe and comfortable environment in which they can:

- Express their thoughts and feelings through play and creative activities
- Learn about "normal" responses to death and loss
- Have their fears and anxieties addressed
- Have their loneliness and isolation reduced by meeting other children who have experienced similar losses

TLC is intended as a resource not only for children from our hospice families but also for children throughout the community who have experienced the death of a family member.

A specially designed workbook is provided, in addition to planned activities, which includes arts and crafts and other creative outlets for each child. Activities are geared to the aged group of the children (elementary, middle school, high school) participating in the support group.

Calendar of Sessions

Week One – Get acquainted time. Review group rules for a safe environment.

- **Self-Control** – no hitting or throwing things if angry
- **Always listen** when others are speaking
- **Feelings** are neither right or wrong
- **Exercise confidentiality** – we don't share what is said in group with those who are outside the group
- Students begin with a discussion about their experience of grief and the feelings that accompany the loss. They learn that all feelings are okay and that it is the behaviors associated with these feelings that can be troublesome. Healthy ways of coping are discussed. The workbook is introduced.

Week Two –Students further discuss feelings and focus on the questions: What are feelings? Who has them? Do they always make sense? When do we have them and why?

Week Three – Students discuss how events such as a death changed their lives and recognize that change is a part of life. Facing fears and "magical thinking" are also discussed.

Week Four – Students discuss the notion of moving forward and recognizing the people, activities and possessions that bring them comfort.

**Please direct inquiries or questions regarding the TLC Program to Susan Resavy
LSW, Director of Family Services at (717) 732-1000.**