

Seasons for Growth

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROGRAM



An innovative grief and loss program that uses the imagery of the seasons to illustrate the experience of grief.

The program was first developed 20 years ago and has been revised and updated to incorporate new evidence and ensure that it continues to provide relevant and valuable experience for participants.

It does not provide counselling or therapy.



What does it do?

Seasons for Growth aims to strengthen the social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people (aged 6-18) who are dealing with significant life changes by:

- Exploring the impact of the **change and loss** on everyday life
- Learning new ways to respond to these changes

Who is it for?

Anyone who is living with the effects of change and loss. Many factors can cause change such as:

- Friends can come and go
- Loss of someone or something you love
- Parents and families separate
- Moving to a new place
- Impact of illness
- Family work-life changes

Change affects everyone differently, as does grief. It's the impact of the change, not the event itself that *Seasons for Growth* focuses on.

We suggest that anyone affected by bereavement wait 6-12 months before participating in a *Seasons for Growth* program.

How does it work?

Seasons for Growth is a small group program that combines psychology and education with peer support, within a person centred learning approach. It uses the metaphor of the seasons to explore the cyclic nature of grief, and is underpinned by William Worden's tasks of grieving. The Children and Young People's program contains developmentally appropriate discussions and activities. *Seasons for Growth* normalises participants' experiences, and can increase protective factors (including building personal resilience and social skills) while minimising some risk factors (including isolation) that influence mental health and wellbeing. The program also supports the development of communication, decision making and problem solving skills.

How is it delivered?

The Program is run over 8 sessions with small groups of 4-7 participants and is facilitated by trained adult "Companions". The participants are provided with a safe space to learn, share and reflect and are supported by richly illustrated participant journals. Companions may be school staff, agency staff, endorsed parent volunteers or other suitable adults who have undertaken a two-day training workshop and receive a subsequent accreditation for Good Grief Ltd to deliver the program.

Outcomes

Seasons for Growth provides the support and space for children and young people to:

- **Learn** about how different people respond to change, loss and grief
- **Understand** that it is normal to experience a range of grief reactions
- **Explore** new approaches to dealing with change, loss and grief in their lives
- **Build** communication, decision making and problem solving skills
- **Participate** in a supportive network of peers and adults
- **Integrate** their new learning into their relationships with family, friends and others

Evidence

Seasons for Growth has been evaluated extensively over the last 15 years. The most recent evaluation was conducted by Southern Cross University in 2010 and concluded that the *Seasons for Growth* Program:

- Builds understanding and skills
- Improves participants' emotional wellbeing
- Enables participants to express their views, thoughts and feelings
- Strengthens participants' social and support networks.

The complete Southern Cross University Evaluation is available at www.goodgrief.org.au/research

The *Seasons for Growth* Children and Young People's Program has a 4 Star rating in the Mind Matters Program Evidence of Effectiveness Ranking: [read more](#)

The *Seasons for Growth* Children and Young People's Program is now listed with the Australian Government, Child Family Community Australia website as an evidence based program.