

## RESOURCES

Our 'Small Book of Big Conversations' is an A5 booklet, offering guidance to parents/guardians supporting children through serious illness and into bereavement. You can download the PDF version from the Rowans Hospice website or if you would like a hard copy of the booklet, please ask one of our healthcare professionals.

### Websites:

#### Riprap

[www.riprap.org.uk](http://www.riprap.org.uk)

Website for young people who have a parent with cancer. There is also a section on bereavement support for young people.

#### Winston's Wish

Helpline: 08452 03 04 05

[www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)

Guidance, information and resources for families of bereaved children. Winston's Wish website also provides a separate website for young people who have been bereaved:

[www.winstonswish.org.uk/foryoungpeople](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk/foryoungpeople)

#### Simon Says

Helpline: 023 8064 7550

[www.simonsays.org.uk](http://www.simonsays.org.uk)

Counselling, guidance, information and resources for families of bereaved children living in Hampshire. Simon Says facilitates monthly support groups for children and young people.

#### Grief Encounter

[www.griefencounter.org.uk](http://www.griefencounter.org.uk)

Information, resources and e-counselling (age 14+) for children, young people and adults who have been bereaved.



Purbrook Heath Road, Purbrook, Waterlooville, Hampshire PO7 5RU

Tel: 023 9225 0001 Fax: 023 9226 8567

[www.rowanshospice.co.uk](http://www.rowanshospice.co.uk)



[www.facebook.com/rowansmeerkatservice](http://www.facebook.com/rowansmeerkatservice)



@RowanTheMeerkat



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 Rowans Meerkat Service

Here to support children, young people  
and their families

What to expect when a  
referral has been made to  
Rowans Meerkat Service



## ROWANS MEERKAT SERVICE

Rowans Meerkat Service is part of the Rowans Hospice organisation. We support children up to the age of 18 who have a significant adult (such as a parent) with a life-limiting illness or who have been bereaved of someone close to them.

This leaflet is designed to help you understand more about what we can offer and what to expect after a referral to our service has been made. Below are some frequently asked questions and answers.

If you have already spoken to your child about our service, it may be helpful to read this leaflet with them so they too can understand more about our referral process and the support we can provide to families, which is based on the assessed needs of each individual child.

### Who can refer to Rowans Meerkat Service?

Professionals known to you and your family can make a referral to Rowans Meerkat Service. For a referral to be considered, there has to be current support being provided to your family by Rowans Hospice. This could be accessing any of our hospice services such as Day Care, in-patient care or support through our Clinical Psychology Team. Alternatively, one of our Community Nurse Specialists (Macmillan Nurse) may be visiting your family at home.

If the bereavement happened some time ago and you no longer have any involvement with the hospice but you are worried about how your child is managing in bereavement, we would invite you to contact our service.

### What happens after a referral to Rowans Meerkat Service has been made?

Someone from Rowans Meerkat Service will contact you (the child's parent/legal guardian), to arrange an initial meeting. However, if the death has only just happened, we usually wait 6 weeks until we get in touch. When we do meet, this appointment usually lasts for about an hour and is an opportunity to talk through your concerns. We will use this time to try to provide as much information as possible to guide your understanding and responses to your child's needs.

The initial meeting will not include your child as this provides a good opportunity for parents to talk openly and honestly. At the end of this initial meeting, we will agree together how our service can best support you and your child. Although other family members or friends are welcome to be at this initial meeting, all of our contact must be with the child's parent/legal guardian.

## What support can the service offer?

*Please note: all children are different and their responses will vary depending on their age and experiences, however, with support from family and friends most children will manage to cope with their loss. Not every child will need one-to-one specialist input. Sometimes, it will be more appropriate to invite a child to one of our groups or workshops.*

There are a number of ways we can provide support to children, both before and after their family member has died. We will carefully assess what sort of support would be most beneficial for your child and will discuss this with you during our initial meeting.

- Often the most appropriate support we can offer is to work closely with parents to provide crucial reassurance and information about bereavement. With parents' permission we can also provide support to the child's school and other relevant agencies.
- We facilitate groups and workshops throughout the year for children and young people who have been bereaved. It may be appropriate for your child to attend one of our 6-session groups where they can meet other children who have experienced the death of someone close to them.
- In some cases, talking with someone outside the family can be helpful to try to begin to make sense of what has happened and find new ways of coping. We carefully assess whether and when individual therapeutic work with a child is needed. The number of sessions provided will vary depending on each child's needs; some children will benefit from just a few sessions while others could need more. At 6 sessions, we will review how the child is doing to see if further support is required. Individual appointments with children can take place at home, Rowans Hospice or at school (appointments tend to take place after the school day has finished).
- Sometimes the difficulties children are experiencing are historical and complex and therefore not a direct result of the bereavement. However, we are only able to work with families when there is a specific role to provide support around the bereavement. In these cases we will endeavour to sign-post you to a more appropriate agency, such as the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service and with your permission, we may be able to complete a referral for you.
- These different forms of support can be discussed more during your initial meeting with us, so that together we can try to ensure the best outcome for your child.