

Seasons for Growth Children and young people's program

Information Session

Developed by: Professor Anne Graham & Julia Truscott



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mackillopseasons.org.au

What is Seasons for Growth?



- A **small group** change, loss and grief education program (4 – 7 participants)
- Developed for children and young people 6-18 years (Levels 1-4)
- Based on the belief that change, loss and grief are part of life
- Explores what we may experience and ways we can respond and adapt



What does Seasons for Growth do?

Educates about the grief process

Develops skills for problem solving, decision making and coping

Builds a peer support network

Helps restore self-confidence and self-esteem

Provides an opportunity for children and young people to 'have a say' ...



Why was the program developed?

Seasons for Growth was originally developed to help educate children and young people about change, loss and grief resulting from death, separation or divorce

Subsequent adaptations of the Seasons for Growth program have been developed for adult, indigenous, refugee, natural disaster, parenting and suicide prevention contexts



Who is the program author?

Anne Graham is Professor Childhood Studies and Director of the Centre for Children and Young People at Southern Cross University.

Anne's background is in education and sociology. Her research and professional interests include children's social and emotional well-being, participation and engagement in schools, ethical issues in researching and working with children and young people, and teacher learning.



What is the structure of the program?

The program consists of four levels:

Level 1 (6 - 8 years): 40 min sessions

Level 2 (9 -10 years): 40 min sessions

Level 3 (11-12 years): 45 min sessions

Level 4 (13-18 years): 50 min sessions

There are 8 formal sessions

+ 1 Celebration session

+ 2 Reconnector sessions (optional)



The metaphor of the seasons is used as a framework for learning

What does it have to do with the seasons?

Powerful for Learning

“Metaphors are powerful ... they can connect an unfamiliar concept with existing knowledge ... and the more vivid and concrete you can make it, the better”

(Middendorf, 2011)

Powerful in Therapy

“A metaphor seems different from the conscious concern or problem ... [so] it allows the conscious mind to relax. But at the same time, the ... unconscious mind can make the match ...” – helpful for bringing about therapeutic change

(Elliot, n.d.)

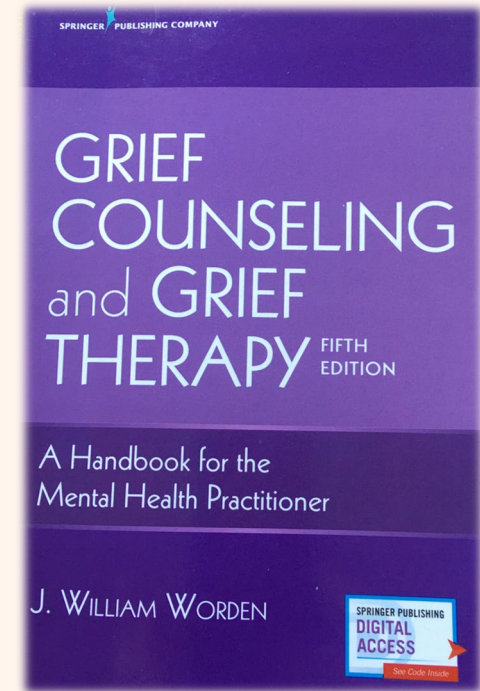


Which grief theory is the program based upon?

J. William Worden's **Task** Theory (1991/ 2018):

- To accept the reality of loss
- To process the pain of grief
- To adjust to a *changed* world after the loss*
- To find an enduring connection with what has been lost* in the midst of embarking on a new life

* The wording of Worden's tasks focuses specifically on bereavement.
These have been adapted slightly for the Seasons for Growth Program.



How is Worden's theory applied to the program?

Worden's theory advises to:

- Engage actively with one's grief via tasks
- There are 4 tasks to engage in
- These 4 tasks are mapped to the 4 seasons
- There are 2 sessions per season

Worden's Tasks	Seasons for Growth® Tasks		Session Content
To accept the reality of the loss	Learn that change and loss are part of life	AUTUMN	Session 1: Life is like the seasons Session 2: Change is part of life
To process the pain of grief	Learn about different ways people experience change and loss	WINTER	Session 3: Valuing my story Session 4: Naming my feelings
To adjust to a changed world after the loss	Learn skills to assist with adapting to change and loss	SPRING	Session 5: Caring for my feelings Session 6: Remembering the good times
To find an enduring connection with what has been lost while embarking on a new life	Learn about ways that help in moving forward with life	SUMMER	Session 7: Making good choices Session 8: Moving forward

What are the learning outcomes ?

In adapting Worden's work to an educational context, the participants in *Seasons for Growth* learn:

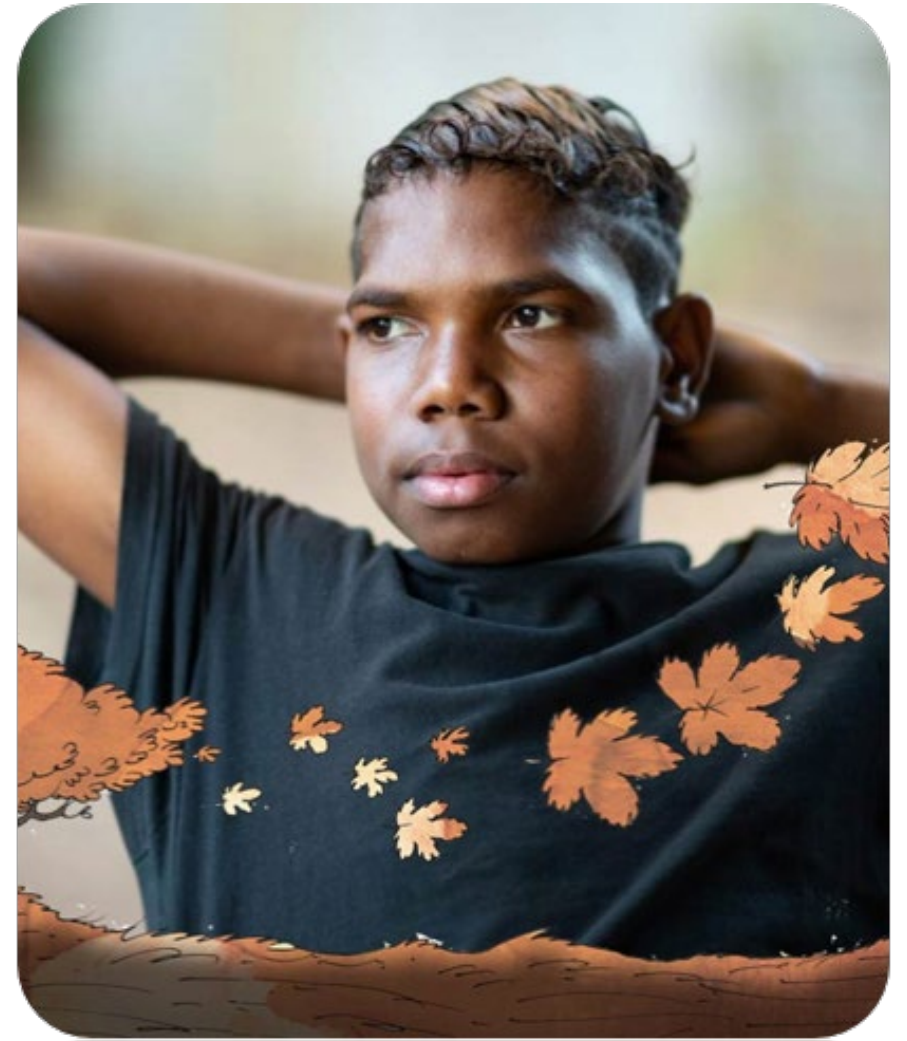
- **that change and loss are part of life**
- **about different ways people experience change and loss**
- **skills to assist with adapting to change and loss**
- **about ways that help in moving forward with life**



What do participants say about Seasons for Growth?

Participants say they are able to:

- understand that life moves forward and that changes do happen
- cope better with their emotions
- seek support, when necessary, outside the formal process of the program
- form friendships and support networks with others in the program
- communicate better with their parents and siblings
- express their feelings without being ashamed of them
- reach out to others.



How does Seasons for Growth fit in to a comprehensive school mental health program?



Who is Seasons for Growth is recognized by?



Australian Government
Australian Institute of
Family Studies



Communities for Children Facilitating Partners Evidence Based Programs



What were the results of the evaluation in 2019?

James Cook University title: The impact of a program to help children manage change and loss

Overall, the results support the suggestion that program attendance is likely to be associated with an improvement in the quality of life of children and young people and that this is maintained after the program has finished.

This is a **very positive finding**; particularly given that many of the children and young people had experienced more than one significant loss or change events.

The qualitative feedback provided by young people and parents also clearly showed just how valued the work of the Companion is.



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Questions?



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