



# demelza

extraordinary care for extraordinary children

Jo Burton Psychotherapeutic Services Lead

## Meaningful connections: Demelza's bereavement support for families

Creating services that support oscillation, as the shape of grief changes over time, is an integral feature of the Demelza Bereavement model. A model with a focus on making and retaining connections; connecting family members with the Demelza team, themselves, their own support network, other families, and their community. This simple approach enables families, regardless of where they are within their grief, to engage in a way and at a time that is right for them. By doing this it creates an evolving service, moving towards becoming a peer supported community, with the family voice not only resonating in response to services provided, but emerging strongly as a body who is affecting change and driving the shape of services to come. Strength within connections enables this to happen, with lived experience valued, and increased opportunities for experiences to be shared created. As we continue to develop, the energy and reach generated within the bereavement service is clear and, supported by evidence, is something which will gain further momentum over time.



"Being with others who get it, surrounded by people who care has added colour that had previously gone."

### Connect with support

Establishing early connections with each family enables needs and wishes to be understood and timely support to be offered.

- Early support keyworker
- Practical support
- Service referrals/contact
- Memory making
- In-Touch calls

### Connect with others

Having opportunities to meet with others, with a similar experience can help to reduce feelings of loneliness, learning ways to navigate through grief, building resilience through shared experience.

- In-Touch newsletter
- Bereaved families Facebook page
- Befriending • Events • Seasonal socials
- Sibling support • Grandparents group
- Dad's/male carers group
- In-person cafés • Virtual café
- Choir

### Connect with change

Establishing a community where services are informed and driven by the families enables families to feel empowered and currency, inclusion and choice to be increased.

- Contributing to policy, resources and process making at Demelza • Taking an active role in the bereavement steering group • Giving feedback
- Story telling • Peer support

### Connect with self

The death of a child can be overwhelming and with life meanings shifted, and the world forever changed, support can give the space and time to explore feelings, helping family members to connect with themselves.

- Art therapy • Music therapy
- Dance therapy • Reflexology
- Together Exploring workshops

"The cafés give me the space to be me. I don't have to pretend. In the outside world I often smile and say things are ok, when they are not. Here I can just be myself."



Find out more



# demelza.org.uk

@demelzacharity     

Registered Charity No.1039651

billy