



The Center *for* Loss and Bereavement



FAMILY INFORMATION PACKET

Since 2003, the Center for Loss and Bereavement has offered a high-quality, child-focused, peer support group program for those ages 4 years through high school and the adults who care for them. Our staff strives to provide a safe, comfortable and interactive space for all participants to express and gain support for their grief. As you consider a group environment for your family, we invite you to learn more about Nello's Corner.

PRINCIPLES

Nello's Corner at the Center for Loss and Bereavement was founded on the belief that every child, teen and adult deserves the opportunity to grieve in a supportive and understanding environment. Often, our society provides only immediate support to those who have experienced a loss. After the initial loss, many are expected to return to their daily routines. We at Nello's Corner believe that grief is an on-going process and strive to connect children and families in an atmosphere that promotes a sense of safety in their expression of grief. The principles of Nello's Corner are:

1. Grief is a natural reaction to the loss of a loved one.
2. Everyone has within the natural capacity to heal oneself.
3. The duration and intensity of grief are unique for each individual.
4. Caring and acceptance assist in the healing process.

"If a child
is old enough
to love,

he or she
is old enough
to grieve."

PROCESS

The Nello's Corner program provides a supportive place for children and teens, ages 4-high school, and their families who are grieving the death of a sibling, parent, or primary caregiver. Our groups are coordinated by professional staff of the Center and facilitated by specially trained volunteers. All potential program participants are screened prior to being assigned to a group. Groups provide time for discussion and activities while remaining flexible to meet the individual needs of the participants. Talking in the group is optional and no one is pressured to share. An important rule reinforced is the "I Pass" rule, allowing participants to choose to talk or pass. We suggest that new participants try their group for three meetings in order to determine if a group format seems beneficial.

CHILDREN'S GROUPS



The children's groups at Nello's Corner are divided into several age groups and may be organized by similar loss. Each group meets twice a month from September to June. A typical meeting will include an opening ritual, discussion circles, opportunities for creative expression and time for unstructured play. Circle time allows children the opportunity to share and listen to one another's experience and often builds a foundation for group camaraderie and trust. An optional activity addressing a particular area of grief will be offered including expression through art, games or writing. For young children, grieving is most often expressed through the powerful language of play, the "work" of children. Children choose where they will play and what they want to do. Opportunities include play acting through puppets/dolls, pretend play, sand table, art, and active play in the Hurricane Room. Older children appreciate time to socialize, whether outside playing sports or indoors with a table game, craft or sharing relaxed conversation. A volunteer facilitator or staff person supervises all activities. The group ends with a closing circle ritual.

TEEN GROUPS

Teens, ages 15 – high school, meet twice a month from September to June. The groups are loosely structured to be primarily discussion oriented, where peers can share experiences and insight through conversation. Creative expression or group games and activities add variety to the time spent together.



ADULT GROUPS

Nello's Corner requires a responsible adult to attend an adult support group, which meets at the same time as the children and teen groups. It gives parents and guardians the opportunity to discuss concerns and gain insight on how to help their children and teens cope with grief. Only the adult who usually attends adult support may participate in the group. Other adults used for transportation, even if related to the person who died, may not attend without prior clearance and a commitment to regular participation.



ATTENDANCE AND CONTINUITY

New members are asked to attend at least three meetings before making a commitment to the program. Following this, regular attendance at groups is expected for all participants. Continuity is very important in order to build a safe, supportive environment for the work of grief. If your family needs to miss a session, we request to be informed in advance. A grief group may not always be a need for your family, however, while in the program, we ask that the commitment be as strong as those made to sports teams or other activities for your child/teen. If attendance becomes sporadic or there are three absences in a row, the family will be contacted to discuss if the program is meeting the needs of the children/teens

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN AND TEENS

Children and teens (under age 16) must be with an adult at all times inside and outside Nello's Corner. Before and after a group, the responsible adult is expected to supervise his/her children. The staff and volunteers have important meetings, prior to and immediately following each session. While in group, Nello's Corner staff and volunteers are with the children and teens at all times. Adult supervision is important because of safety and liability issues, in case of emergency, or for the emotional needs and support of the child/teen. Therefore, no child age 4-15 is permitted to be dropped off and left alone in order to attend groups. There may be rare occasional circumstances when a caregiver needs to arrange for another responsible adult to transport the child/teen. These persons will be listed on the Family Agreement Form signed at the time of the orientation visit. They must remain at the Center for the duration of the group.

PREPARATION FOR SUPPORT GROUP MEETINGS

The work of grief takes concentration and energy. Please be sure that your child or teen has eaten before coming to group. Nello's Corner activities for the children's groups may include physical games, hands-on arts and crafts and outdoor activities. Dress should be casual, comfortable and appropriate to the weather. From time to time, children or teens may wish to bring mementos, music, writings or artwork to share and this is strongly encouraged.



There may be times when Nello's Corner groups are offered through a virtual format, such as Zoom. While not the same as being in a common physical locale with one another, the groups will provide a predictable schedule and opportunity to connect with grieving peers. Group members need to have a quiet and confidential place in order to participate for respect and secure protection of the participant's input and that of the other group members. It is preferred that members are visible through use of a camera and will need a device with a microphone. Peers may bring items to these meetings to share as they would during in-person formats and are told in advance if any other supplies are needed for a session (ie. paper, markers, pillows)

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PRIVACY

Confidentiality is based upon our basic human right of privacy. It permits a safe environment for people to share thoughts, feelings and stories freely. We regard anything spoken during a Nello's Corner group to be confidential. We accept the obligation to honor confidentiality for children, teens and adults to assure the ongoing success of our support groups. Nello's Corner staff facilitators and volunteers are available to discuss with you their impressions of your child or teen in a general manner, but we will not disclose specifics of what is said or done in groups. The only time that confidentiality would not be honored is if a safety issue becomes a concern as stipulated on the Rights and Privacy Form signed by all participants at the time of the orientation visit. No written records are kept of what children, teens or adults disclose in groups and no recordings or photos are ever permitted by group members unless explicit permission is given in advance.



There are potential risks to confidentiality, especially when using a virtual format. Technology issues such as interruptions, unauthorized access or technical difficulties, not to mention others being present nearby or walking by during a group are beyond the Center's control. Privacy and confidentiality of any conversation held via phone or microphone can be intercepted accidentally or intentionally. Recordings and screenshots are strictly prohibited and grounds for removal from a support group. The Center makes every effort to have as much protection in place for our virtual group format.

VISITORS

No visitors or guests are permitted to attend or visit children's, teen, or adult group sessions because of confidentiality issues.

COUNSELING SERVICES

Nello's Corner is a children's program offered at the Center for Loss and Bereavement. Our Center also provides professional counseling by therapists specifically trained in the area of loss and bereavement for individuals, couples and families. We recognize that a family may need more than a peer support group in processing grief. The Center's counselors are available to provide consultations and counseling if needed.



COST and DONATIONS

The Nello's Corner program is a donation-based program and offered free of charge for as long as it is beneficial for a family. The Center for Loss and Bereavement is a non-profit organization. A large portion of financial support comes from individuals. Families participating in the Nello's Corner program are encouraged to make donations to the Center. Tax deductible gifts can be made in honor or in memory of a loved one. We are very grateful for all contributions as families are able.

FEEDBACK AND FAMILY EVALUATIONS

The thoughts, ideas and comments from children, teens and adults are extremely valuable to the Center. Constructive evaluation, creative suggestions, and affirmative feedback can help us to assess and modify our program to better meet your needs. Periodically, participating family members are asked to complete evaluation forms which will assist staff in continuing to provide a quality program for future families.

SAYING GOODBYE TO NELLO'S CORNER

Because the duration and intensity of grief are unique for each individual, participants may remain in the program for as long as needed to help find the strength necessary to heal, grow and develop additional support systems. Prior notice of two weeks is requested before leaving a group. This affords children and adults the opportunity to participate in a farewell ritual and say goodbye as their journey continues beyond Nello's Corner.

