

Supporting Parents and Carers of Neurodiverse Children:

How to deal with change and loss

- **Dates:** Last Thursday of each month - *see dates below*
- **Time:** 10.30 am – 12 pm
- **Location:** Harlington Hospice and online access
- **Facilitators:** The Child and Adolescent Bereavement team at Harlington Hospice and guest speakers.
- **Cost:** Free to those living in the London Borough of Hillingdon.

Dear Parent/Carer,

You are invited to attend a series of four support groups for parents and carers to help support children and young people who are Neurodiverse with change and loss.

What is Neurodiversity?

“Neurodiversity describes the idea that people experience and interact with the world around them in many different ways; there is no one ‘right’ way of thinking, learning, and behaving, and differences are not viewed as deficits. The word neurodiversity refers to the diversity of all people, but it is often used in the context of autism spectrum disorder (ASD), as well as other neurological or developmental conditions such as ADHD or learning disabilities. Neurodiversity advocates inclusive non-judgmental language.”

(Harvard Medical School, Baumer, N., Frueh, J, 2021)

What is the need?

We understand that supporting you as parents and carers of neurodiverse children and young people, who have experienced change or loss, is very important. Often neurodiverse children and young people may experience isolation, bullying and discrimination. They will struggle with accessing adequate support and communicating their needs. In moments of change and loss these difficulties may intensify and it will have an impact on the whole family. It is essential, therefore, to create systems of care around families and to listen to the voices of neurodiverse children.

The groups will help professionals identify the barriers and challenges in providing psychological aid to neurodiverse children and their families, and adapt services to their needs. Research and practice show that timely psychological support, provided for families, can: improve mental health, help with relationships, assist in managing challenging behaviours, and build emotional resilience.

When will the groups take place?

Groups will run on the last Thursday of each month for 1 hour 30 minutes with the following topics:

- **Thursday 30th March** **Loss, Change and Neurodiversity**
- **Thursday 27th April** **Coping with Challenging Behaviours: *what I can do as a parent?***
- **Thursday 25th May** **Family Traditions and Beliefs in Managing Grief**
- **Thursday 29th June** **Communication: *conversations within families and beyond***

How could these groups help?

- ✓ Support and guidance for difficult conversations about change and loss with children you care for.
- ✓ Provide an understanding of children and young people's reactions to change and loss, such as anger, anxiety and isolation.
- ✓ Learn ways of coping with challenging behaviours.
- ✓ Share your experiences with others.
- ✓ Reflect on the role of culture, religion and family traditions in managing change and loss.
- ✓ Develop new communication skills to help children and young people better understand and manage their feelings.
- ✓ Examine ways of adapting to changes, in a safe and supportive environment.

What to expect:

As there is a limited number of places for these groups it will be essential to book early. It is beneficial to attend all four groups and participants are expected to notify the team 48 hours prior to the group if they cannot attend. This provides an opportunity for others to attend.

Each group will have two important elements: an educational presentation and informal group discussion facilitated by two group conductors. Groups will take place at Harlington Hospice and will be available online. All groups will be conducted by experienced psychotherapists in a safe and supportive manner. The Harlington Hospice team adopts an inclusive and collaborative approach. Participant's feedback would be highly appreciated.

How to join:

To join the groups, please reply to the email confirming your interest

Email: cabsreferrals@harlingtonhospice.org

Contact: 02087590453 (*ask for Paula Boyle, Ayesha Din or Nana Zhvitiashvili at Harlington Hospice*)

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have further questions.

We work in partnership with:

- Hillingdon Autistic Care and Support (HACS)
- Local Schools
- GP practices
- H4ALL
- Young Carers Trust
- Hillingdon Mental Health Services
- Hillingdon Social Services

For further information: Please visit the Child and Adolescent Bereavement Service webpage at:

<https://www.harlingtonhospice.org/Pages/Category/cabs>