

Wigan Safeguarding Partnership 7 Minute Briefing- A Good Bereavement Support Example

Background

Rapid Review processes highlighted the good practice of Early Years and the Early Years Setting, in their offer of Bereavement support to professionals. Support was offered to the Early Years Setting via Early Years, Educational Psychology, and the Early Years bereavement support lead. Early years were able to support professionals external to the Early Years Setting. They were also able to inform internal processes to ensure that a bereaved family would not be contacted in relation to their child's attendance at Early Years Setting in the new term.

What was the Learning?

- In this case, Early Years Setting staff had not accessed critical incident training. The Early Years Setting had an excellent working relationship with early years professionals, due to the child having additional support. This meant that the critical incident procedure could be initiated on the same day, providing timely support and information to the Early Years Setting, and a point of contact for further questions.
- Links with a bereavement support lead external to the Early Years Setting, meant that the manager was able to access support whilst supporting staff.
- The variety of resources available to support both staff and children with their bereavement, meant that the offer was tailored to the needs of each individual. Direct work with children in the Early Years Setting was undertaken and staff were confident and able to complete this.
- Such incidents are rare and may only happen once in a career. Ensuring there are professionals who are trained both internally and externally to be able to offer support allows a robust support offer, where no individual is managing grief alone.
- The manager in this setting was aware that several staff would be particularly vulnerable. Having this awareness allowed her to tailor her approach to supporting those members of her team.

Why is this important to Wigan?

Wigan's Safeguarding Partnership are committed to improving the offer around bereavement support in Wigan. Trained bereavement support leads are available across the borough who provide advice and support to anyone working with a bereaved person or family

What can we consider?

- Does your service have a bereavement support policy which would guide a streamlined response to loss?
- Do you know who the bereavement support lead is for your service or how to access training?
- Does your service have a critical incident procedure which is up to date and accessible with contact details for relevant individuals and key things to consider following an incident?
- If you are a manager, are you aware of potential vulnerabilities or incidents in the lives of your team members, which may make dealing with a critical incident difficult for them?
- Following a critical incident when and how will you begin to think about longer term support, for example supporting children and staff who will move to a new setting or supporting siblings who will join the setting

What can you do right now?

- Remember that the grieving process differs from person to person and therefore the impact of the trauma can be difficult to identify.
- Be familiar with readily available support
- Practice active listening
- don't be afraid to say you do not know the answer but do your best to offer appropriate support.

Want to learn more?

Information about [supporting bereaved individuals](#)

Information about [support services available in wigan](#)

For bereavement support contact: bereavementsupport@wigan.gov.uk