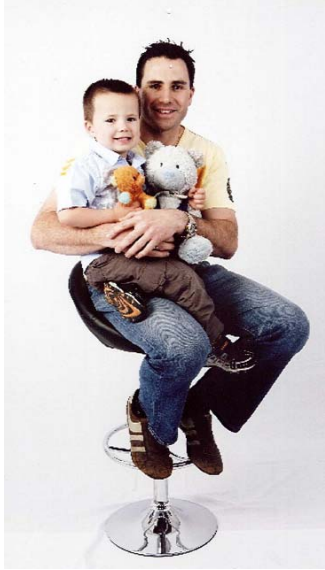

BALLARAT
HOSPICE
CARE (INC)
STAFF
PARKING
ONLY





Younger Bereaved Support Group Initiative - 2009





A Representation from the Group

t, Victoria 3353 **Telephone** - 03 5333 1118 **Facsimile** - 03 5333 1119 **Email** - admin@ballarathospice.com **Reg** - A3611 **ABN** - 41 839 611 725

PCA Standard 8

BALLARAT HOSPICE CARE INC.

"Formal mechanisms are in place to ensure that the patient, their caregiver/s and family have access to bereavement care, information and support services"

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BHCI Policy

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"That Bereavement Support Programs will remain relevant & responsive to the bereaved population presenting at any given time"

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Rationale for New Program

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- Larger than usual number of younger deaths
- Younger bereaved had reported different needs to those met by pre existing programs – “not good fit with older people with other vistas”
- Some younger bereaved had participated in those forums, and sought alternative forum type

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Bereavement Support Programs

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- Regional City demographics & groups
- Exclusive to home based program also an issue
- Group viability issues in general
- Outreach beyond palliative care population, so overall benefit – client referral from PCU & Centrelink, also 2 local acute hospitals occasionally

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Dynamics of Groups

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- Resistance factors
- Small town issues of confidentiality
- Gender Mix
- Age spectrum
- Mix of Bereavement Type
- Variety of circumstances – short prognosis – long care episode

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Process - format

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- Group leader & co-leader – extensive experience in bereavement support groups
- 2 volunteers – longer term bereaved status
- Screening & selection of prospective participants

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Benefits of groups

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- Aims and Objectives are set in place – one vital role of the facilitator is to maintain the thrust and keep the norms of the group positive
- Perspective often developed
- Blend of professional guidance and self help components (mutual support)
- Catalytic process vs 1:1

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Initial Session

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- Ten attended
- Structured – 5 pairs – comprising 1 more recently bereaved with another longer term bereaved
- 15 – 20 minutes – fact finding between each pair
- Each pair introduced the other to whole group with a précis of their story

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Benefits & Challenges of groups

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- Survival is evidence based
- Hope and optimism prevail
- Group norms must be maintained
- Support groups & “bad press” - of absolute paramount importance is the tenet “do no harm”

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Benefits & Challenges of groups (cont.)

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- As stories were related, it became clear that there were individual differences
- Many similarities and parallels
- Malignant disease was the universal experience of all those who had died
- Many issues and remarks were made spontaneously

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Review after initial meeting

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- Frequency of Group meetings - monthly
- Ballarat Hospice Care Board Room is venue
- Light refreshments by group members
- Ideally combined with a Kids Grieve Too (KG2) program – consider at later date

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Review (cont.)

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- Timing – out of working day, so time 6 to 8pm
- Eligibility –
  - no age ceiling set, but generally suited to those with children (up to young adults)
  - Those still working
  - Those engaged in further education

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A Couple in Mourning

Bobbie Weidner

Narrative

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- Became and remains a key focus as with many other aspects of Pall Care practice
- Narratives were introduced after reference to a piece of art work in the room
- Suggestion made that group members could introduce their loved one to the group via this medium or another

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Tim – volunteered to introduce Renee to the group

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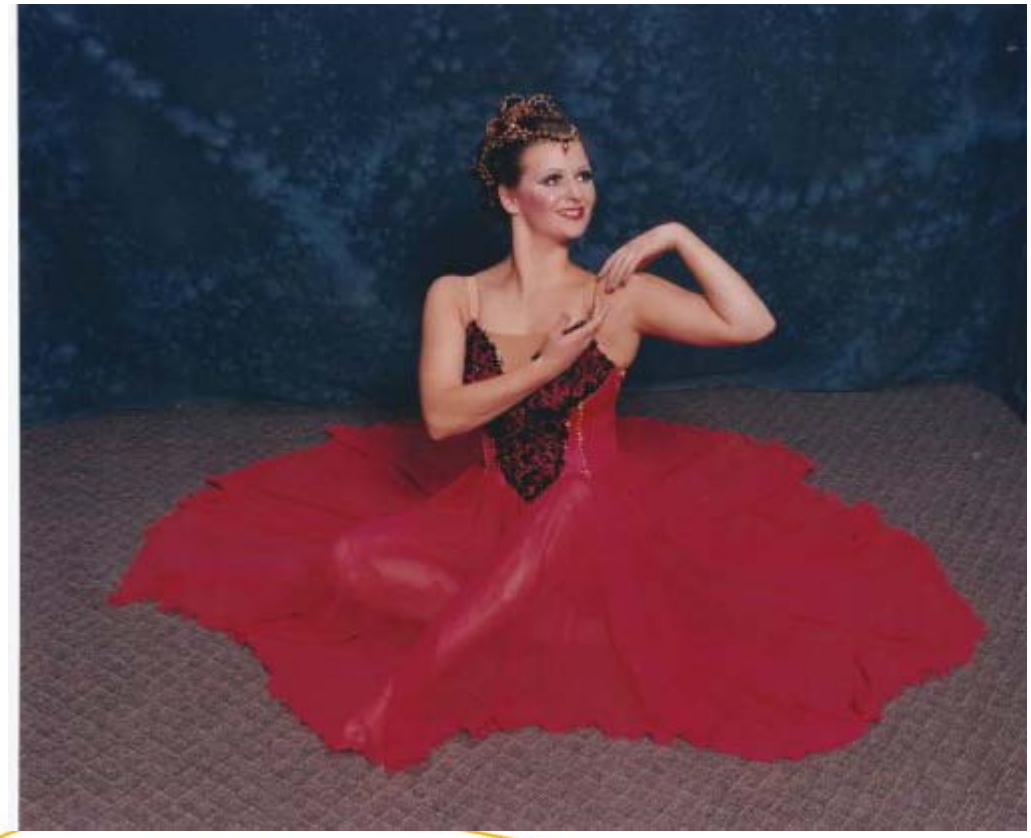
Renee was diagnosed with Glioblastoma

Tim and Renee in their Courting Days

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Renee

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For several years Renee was a finalist in the Royal South Street Calisthenics Competitions for Graceful Girl Soloist

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Caleb and Tim

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Presenting the annual

"Renee Knight Memorial Perpetual Trophy"

Winner of the Graceful Solo

Royal South Street Competitions

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