

Cruse Bereavement Care

Children and Young People's Service

Cruse service is open to bereaved children, young people in the Isle of Man. They will receive dedicated support through their grieving and healing process.

Cruse also provides support and advice for families, schools and other professionals around death and grief. This can involve telephone support, online (face to face support), text support, email support and in person where possible (restrictions currently in place around Covid-19). This initial support helps to recognise and understand feelings and develops individual coping strategies. Cruse also offer our CruzKids project which provides various social activities so children and young people can meet others with similar experiences.

CruzKids is a unique service for bereaved children and young people on the Isle of Man by helping and supporting them in group setting involving activities and therapeutic support. Bereavement in childhood has been shown to link to reduced educational outcomes and lower aspirations. Being with other bereaved children and young people with similar experiences helps them to understand and "normalise" feelings and emotions, thus increasing self-esteem and confidence. Experience shows that these opportunities help to counter the impact upon life chances and outcomes.

CruzKids allows children and young people to recognise their feelings, to grieve at their own pace and in their own time and to be themselves, not to be defined by their experiences.

Feedback from CruzKids shapes the service we offer to enable us to provide the best and most appropriate support. Currently there is a busy annual programme including monthly social meet-ups, annual residential weekend – plus a family weekend for bereaved children and young people along with their carers, Christmas Party, family day, summer scheme and mentoring scheme where our older CruzKids support those who are younger or more recently bereaved.

CruzKids is the name given to the group by themselves and has been running with great success for almost 15 years. Initially the scheme started with annual residential weekends at Maughold Venture Centre. Feedback from the weekends was really positive, the bonding over various outward bound type activities, puzzle solving, campfires, meals and social time was evident. Many of these first CruzKids are now successful adults and great ambassadors for Cruse.

Some quotes from CruzKids

- *"here I can just be myself – everyone just gets it"*
- *"sometimes I want to talk about my sister, just because she died doesn't mean she didn't exist"*
- *"it doesn't matter if you cry here, somebody will give you a hug because they understand"*
- *"if it wasn't for CruzKids I wouldn't be where I am now"*

For advice, information or support telephone 668191 or email info@cruseisleofman.org