MATIKA

Matika offers an opportunity for children who have lost someone close to them to connect with peers in a supportive environment. Together, they explore the emotions of grief, learn coping strategies, and discover ways to maintain a connection with the departed loved one. Matika translates to “Stand strong”, and is a safe space for tamariki to process, learn, and share.

- Matika is a free 8-week bereavement programme for tamariki 6-12 years.
- The programme runs from 4pm-5:20pm on Wednesdays.
- The group will consist of 4-8 participants.

The programme aims to help participants

- adapt to and develop a better understanding of grief to establish healthy ways of coping with the big emotions that come along with the experience of grief.
- maintain the bond they had with their loved one who passed away and helps them to discover meaningful ways of honouring their memory.
- connect with others as they have the opportunity to engage with other Tamariki of similar ages who have had similar experiences of loss. This can reduce feelings of loneliness and help them feel reassured that it’s not just them, and that grieving is a normal response after losing a loved one.

Structure and Delivery

- **Psychoeducational Sessions:** Each session will focus on a specific aspect of grief, such as understanding emotions, dealing with sadness, or finding ways to remember and honour the loved one.
- **Therapeutic Activities:** Creative arts (e.g., drawing, writing, creating), role-play, story books, and group discussions will be used to help children express their feelings and build coping skills.
- **Family Engagement:** At key points in the programme, caregivers will be invited to join sessions to learn how to support their child’s grief process. This typical happens at the end of each session and the participants will agree on what they would like to share with their whānau. Handouts will also be given at the end of each session for the whānau to take away and use to facilitate conversations at home.

Facilitators and Support Team

Matika will be facilitated by three Matika Buddies who have backgrounds in grief counselling, child psychology, and trauma-informed care. The team will include counsellors, psychologists and graduates.

Please direct your questions to the programmes team by emailing programmes@skylight.org.nz or calling 04 595 5870.

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The sessions:

Throughout the eight sessions, tamariki learn to name emotions they may have encountered during their grief. At the beginning of every session the tamariki are asked to identify two different feelings they currently feel reinforcing the practice of naming their emotional state. They also learn to acknowledge that big and overwhelming feelings are okay and there are things that they can do to help put themselves back in control of how they feel. The tamariki share with each other about 'what helps me' to practically work through these big feelings and express them in a healthy way; e.g., breathing, talking to someone you trust, thinking happy thoughts, having a treat etc., reinforcing the practice of tapping into their internal or external resources.

Session #	Topic	Activity
Session 1	My group	Memory heart/stone
Session 2	My feelings	Feeling biscuits Feelings friend
Session 3	My feelings	Exploding coke bottle
Session 4	My superpower	T-3-1 bag-ring/bracelet
Session 5	My story	Storyboard
Session 6	My wonders & worries	3 W's game (worry, wonder & wacky activity) Worry pet
Session 7	My memories	Sharing of special items Memory box
Session 8	My future hopes	Future pillowcase Message of hope
Matika Celebration (week 8 or 9)		