



## What is *Seasons for Growth*®?

*Seasons for Growth*® is based on the belief that change and loss are part of life and grief is a normal response to these losses. Children, young people and adults need the opportunity to learn about how death, separation, divorce or other significant loss events may impact on their lives. The *Seasons for Growth*® programs provide an opportunity for participants to learn the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to understand and respond well to such experiences.

### The *Seasons for Growth*® Children and Young People's Program:

- supports children and young people to understand and respond well to the issues they experience as a result of death, separation, divorce or other significant change and loss in their lives
- assists children and young people to understand that their feelings and other reactions are normal
- develops skills for coping, problem solving and decision making
- builds a peer support network
- helps restore self-confidence and self-esteem
- educates children and young people about the grief process.

The program is based on small group like-to-like peer learning processes (4–7 participants with 1 adult 'Companion'), creating a safe space for children and young people aged 6–18 years to practise new ways of thinking and responding to change and loss in their lives. The emphasis is on understanding the effects of change, loss and grief, whilst developing skills in communication, decision making and problem solving. The program is underpinned throughout by an emphasis on the development of children and young people's *identity* ('I am'), *relationships* ('I have') and *competence* ('I can'), helping to build self-confidence, self-esteem and a felt sense of belonging and connection.

The *Seasons for Growth*® program is evidence based and relies on research, strategies and techniques consistent with high quality, psychosocial education. The program has a sound curriculum structure and incorporates a wide range of age-appropriate activities including writing, drawing, discussion, stories, role play, music, guided meditation and journalling. Children's learning is largely generated through these activities and the conversations that emerge from stories shared, questions asked, skills learnt and friendships developed. This child-centred approach to learning encourages participants to not only value who they are and the particular 'story' they have, but also to modify where necessary their thinking, attitudes, beliefs and constructs about life and to 'take charge' of their behaviours. As de Winter and colleagues (1999) point out:

*Learning by doing, learning by participation instead of exclusion is to be considered as a powerful tool to promote self-confidence, self-respect and a sense of control over one's own life.*