Teacher's Resource

How to Look After a Grieving Elephant

(and Other Social Animals)



A teacher's resource for exploring grief with children in Key Stage 2

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About the resource

Adults can often find it difficult to talk to children about death and grief. One of the reasons for this is because adults are keen to protect children from pain and distress. However, what we have learned from working with Child Bereavement UK is that avoiding the subject of death and grief can unfortunately cause confusion, shame, and ultimately more distress for the child.

From September 2026, the UK Government made it mandatory to teach children about the subject of grief within a school setting, to better equip children with the knowledge and strategies to cope with grief and support others.

The How to Look After a Grieving Elephant (and Other Social Animals) teacher's resource aims to help children talk about death and grief in a fun and creative setting even if they have not experienced bereavement in their own lives. We encourage children's curiosity and agency by calling them animal investigators and encouraging them to become experts in animal grief behaviour.

The resource also reminds children that grief can create uncomfortable emotions but that these emotions are normal and natural - even some other members of the animal kingdom experience them!

It encourages children to think about how we can be kind to someone experiencing grief. We hope that these ideas will help to tackle cases of bullying which many grieving children have reportedly experienced in school settings.

The resource is not designed to act in place of specialised bereavement support, nor is it designed to be used by children in crisis. We recommend that any children who are struggling with a recent bereavement seek out support via Child Bereavement UK.



About the resource

Through using this resource, children will:

- **Learn** about grief and how it can affect people in different ways.
- **Explore** how social animals, including elephants, monkeys, wolves, whales, giraffes, and crows respond to loss and care for one another.
- **Consider** how we can support ourselves and others during difficult times.
- **Create** a toolkit of ideas, activities and strategies to help young people cope with grief.
- **Develop** confidence in having conversations about grief, loss, and remembrance in a safe and supportive environment.

This project was created by Jenny Gaskell, an artist who creates performances and participatory art work, specialising in the field of grief. Jenny regularly designs projects within hospice settings across the North West.

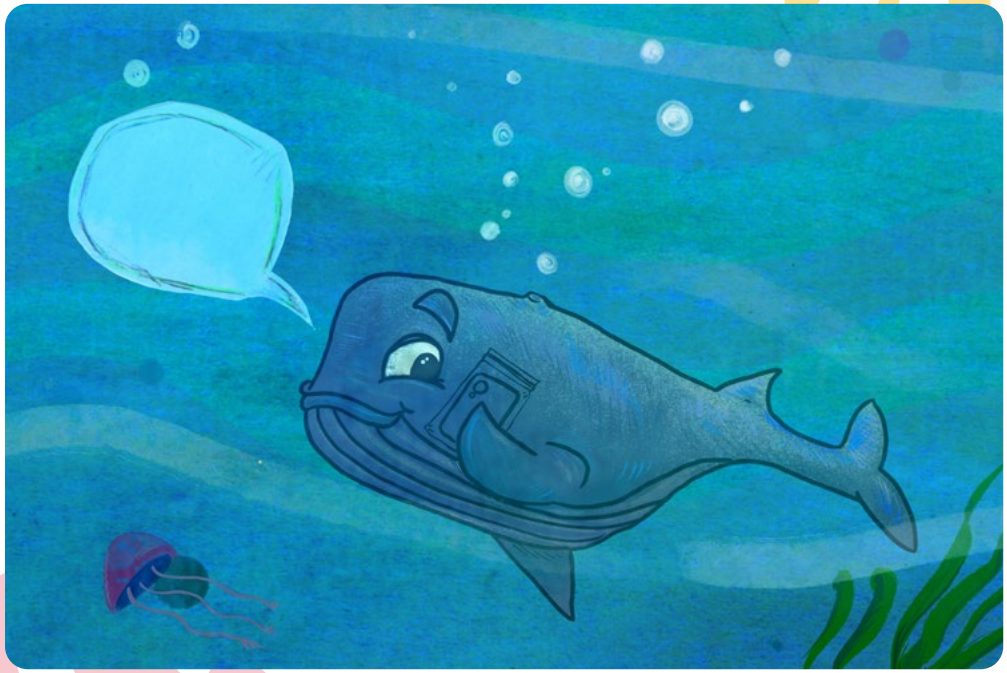
This resource was produced by Heart of Glass, a Merseyside-based community arts organisation that brings artists and communities together to make art, in collaboration with Wonder Arts, a Northwest based charity that provides access to world-class arts experiences for children, young people and families.

The team worked in close collaboration with children who had experienced bereavement and partners Child Bereavement UK, Willowbrook Hospice and Allanson Street Primary School in St Helens.

Resource Feedback

We'd love to see what you create with this resource, please share any pictures with us by emailing:

jenny@jennygaskell.com
info@heartofglass.org.uk



Teacher's workshop preparation

The workshops in this resource should be delivered in order, as each session carefully builds upon the knowledge and trust established in the previous workshops.

- You're welcome to slightly adapt timings of workshops to fit your school setting, however we ask that schools **do not deviate from the order of the workshops** or the specialist advice from Child Bereavement UK regarding how to talk to children about death and dying.
- Workshops are suitable for key stage 2.
- We recommend teaching staff receive training from Child Bereavement UK about talking to children about grief. Please see advice and support information on page 40.
- We recommend providing a quiet break out space with comforting toys and books for children to take a break if they feel upset.
- We recommend that the workshops do not take place in the final class of the day and ideally take place in the morning. This will allow teachers and staff members to check-in with children who experience uncomfortable emotions in the sessions.
- Ahead of the project, it is recommended that you share the letter with parents/carers which explains that you will be exploring the topic of grief and loss in an age appropriate, child-friendly way.
- Feel free to share this resource with parents and carers if they wish to know more about the workshops.
- Use the **How to Look After a Grieving Elephant Teacher's Presentation** alongside each workshop.
- We recommended a minimum of two staff members are present in each session so you have enough support on hand to support the children.
- Each workshop has a list of materials needed for the activities.
- Each workshop contains a slide that includes child-friendly definitions of terms; links to videos and images for reference throughout each session.
- Use the QR code below to listen to **'The Grief Helpline for Social Animals'** and **read the Audio Scripts Book** which were both developed with children who have experienced bereavement.

Download:
Teacher's Presentation (PDF)

Download:
The Grief Helpline for Social Animals (PDF)

Listen to:
'The Grief Helpline for Social Animals'

Teacher's resource learning journey

Curriculum objectives	Workshop 1: Welcome Animal Investigators	Workshop 2: How to Look After a Grieving Elephant	Workshop 3: How to Look After a Grieving Monkey	Workshop 4: How to Look After a Grieving Wolf	Workshop 5: How to Look After a Grieving Whale	Workshop 6: How to Look After a Grieving Giraffe	Workshop 7: How to Look After a Grieving Crow
That grief is a natural response and everyone experiences it differently	Explore what grief is and how it is displayed.	Learn about how elephants show grief behaviour.	Learn about how monkeys show grief behaviour.	Learn about how wolves show grief behaviour.	Learn about how whales show grief behaviour and make connections to ourselves.	Learn about how giraffes show grief behaviour and make connections to ourselves.	Create a self-care collection and celebrate learning.
How to recognise when someone is grieving	Learn about some of the behaviours a grieving person might show e.g. anger, tearful, shocked.	→					
Age-appropriate ways to support a bereaved peer		Children will explore phrases and language that can be un/helpful when supporting someone who is grieving.	Children will explore how some people will appreciate hugs and comfort when grieving.	Children will explore how some people will choose alone time and personal space when grieving.	Children will explore how holding on to mementos and sharing memories can help a grieving person.	Children will explore different kinds of memorial sites and gatherings including funerals.	Children will create a toolkit of suggestions and techniques to use if they find themselves or a friend/family member struggling with grief.
Where to access help if they're bereaved themselves	Letter to parents with signposts to Child Bereavement UK. Refer to advice and support on page 44.	→					
Different cultural perspectives on death and mourning	This is a chance to hear about the children's experiences/ understanding of grief and how they may differ culturally.		Understand that not everyone experiences grief in the same way.	Further understand that not everyone experiences grief in the same way.	Explore if children have any other traditions to remember loved ones in their own cultures.	Explore if children have any knowledge of historical memorials or monuments they know of.	Reflect on all the grief support techniques that the children have explored. Consider together if they have found out how different cultures and animals grieve.
Key vocabulary	grief, grieving, social, species	grief, burial, social, herd	tactile, troop, grounded	personal space, pack, communicate	tactile, sensory, memento, pod, cremation, ashes	vigil, monument, memorial, funeral, giraffe	self-care, precious, hordes, remembrance, wake, vigil

Child-friendly definition of terms

social:

Friendly; spending time with other people/animals.

species:

A group of animals or plants that are the same kind.

tactile:

Something you can touch or feel with your hands.

grounded:

When someone feels calm, steady, or thinking clearly.

communicate:

To share ideas or feelings by talking, writing, or showing.

sensory:

Describes anything related to the physical senses (sight, smell, hearing, taste, and touch).

memento:

A small object you keep to help you remember something or someone special.

vigil:

A quiet time when people stay together to remember or think about someone.

monument:

A special building or statue made to honour a person or event.

memorial:

Something made to help people remember someone or something that happened.

self-care:

Taking care of your mind and body, like resting, eating well, or doing things that make you feel better.

precious:

Very special and important.

remembrance:

Remembering someone or something important.

wake:

A gathering where people come together to remember someone who has died.

cremation and ashes:

Sometimes the body will be taken to a special place and turned into a kind of powder called ashes



Workshop 1:

Welcome, Animal Investigators!

An introduction to the project



Workshop 1:

Welcome, Animal Investigators!

Materials for the room

- A notebook (expedition notebook or regular exercise book) and pen for all children.
- A cosy break out space for any students who feel upset. This could include cuddly toys or books about animals.
- A4 paper and crayons/colouring in pens.
- How to Look After a Grieving Elephant presentation.

Key vocabulary

grief • grieving • social • species

NOTE

As the workshops progress, the children will be making objects which will form a self-care pack in the final workshop. Please collect and label these objects at the end of each workshop and keep them safe.

This workshop is an introduction to the project and an opportunity to spark children's curiosity about social animals. They will learn about how social animals play in the wild and draw pictures.

Over the course of seven workshops, we are going to become animal investigators, learning about how different social animals play in the wild and how they grieve. This workshop is also an opportunity to observe how children respond to the subject of grief and bring to light experiences which may not have been raised by parents/carers.



Introduction to the project

15 MINUTES

- Over the course of 7 workshops, we are going to become animal investigators, learning about how different social animals play and grieve in the wild. As we learn, we're going to be making crafts and doing art activities.
- We will be learning how different social animals play when they're in the wild.
- We will be learning about how these animals show signs of grief when a fellow animal dies.
- Ask the children if they know what the word grief means. You could play the audio of 'What is Grief' via the QR code to help here, or read the book.

Things to discuss:

- Feeling grief is natural, a lot of scientists believe that it's not just humans who experience grief but lots of other social animals do too. This is what we will be discovering in the workshops.
- Grief emotions might include sadness, anger, feeling confused or numb.
- These emotions might change or we might jump between these feelings as well as thinking about other things and feeling happy.
- Bereavement is a word which means the grief we feel when a human dies. Tell the children what a 'social animal' is. It's an animal which survives best when they're able to spend lots of time living and playing with other members of their species. Just like being part of a family or school community. We are going to be learning about elephants, monkeys, wolves, whales, giraffes and crows.
- A reminder that grief might include all kinds of emotions. Talking about death and grief can be upsetting so they can go to the break out space if they would like to.

Warm up/check-in activity: Animal name game

10 MINUTES

- Go round in a circle and think of an animal with the same letter as your first name then do an impression. E.g. "I'm Jenny Jellyfish".

In talking partners, ask the children to discuss how they like to spend time together

5 MINUTES

- You could offer examples of playing their favourite games, reading stories, going to the cinema, eating together, looking after each other.
- Encourage a couple of children to share their ideas with the class.

Listen to:
'What is Grief?'

Share examples of how social animals play in the wild (see presentation for images)

5 MINUTES

- **Elephants** socialise by swimming together and snorkelling with their trunk.
- **Monkeys** like to groom each other's hair.
- **Wolves** spend time communicating with each other through sound (like howling), smell (like rolling in the grass) and body language.
- **Whales** love to swim together too! But they also play with seaweed, like a sensory toy.
- **Giraffes** like to walk together and eat together, with the adults reaching the top branches!
- **Crows** sometimes collect things. Adult crows collect and hide food but young crows sometimes play by collecting and hiding other objects, like acorn caps or stones.

Creative drawing or writing

10 MINUTES

- In their notebook, invite children to choose an animal activity that they would like to do in the wild.
- Ask if they like swimming, would you like to plait monkey's hair, have a chat (howling), collect things, play with toys or have a meal with an animal?
- Activity: Children will write a story or draw a picture of themselves making friends with an animal and taking part in one of their favourite activities.

Ask children to share what they made and explain their choices and reasons

10 MINUTES

- At this point, it is useful to prepare the children that next week we will be learning about grieving elephants.

Check out

5 MINUTES

- With the children, consider if our emotions were an animal, what sort of animal do we feel like after today? Do we feel tired like a sloth, do we want to curl up like a cat, or have lots of energy like a puppy?
- It is useful to highlight that there is no such thing as a 'bad' emotion, we might have uncomfortable emotions or comfortable emotions, but all of them are okay and it is part of being a human to experience a range of feelings.

Something to be mindful about

As with all workshops, children might express difficult emotional responses or ask challenging questions. Following guidance from Child Bereavement UK, remember that these reactions and questions are healthy and part of their processing.

Although this can be uncomfortable for adults, please try to remain as open and curious as possible and thank them for their honesty. Try your best not to react in a shocked manner or jump to 'fix' their emotions (for example by telling them not to be sad) as this can lead to feelings of shame or bottling up emotions.

Workshop 2:

How to Look After a Grieving Elephant

Exploring useful words and behaviour



Workshop 2:

How to Look After a Grieving Elephant

Materials for the room

- The notebook from workshop one and pen for all children.
- Glossary of terms and tips.
- Ice-lolly sticks or card.
- Scissors.
- Glue stick or cellotape.
- A4 paper and crayons/ colouring in pens.
- A cosy break out space for any students who feel upset.
- How to Look After a Grieving Elephant presentation.
- **See appendix for:**
  - Template of elephant mask.
  - Template of leaves with suggestions.
  - Template of leaves without suggestions.

Key vocabulary

grief • burial • social • herd

It may be helpful to write these words on the board and the word 'elephant' for spelling. It may help to add the steps of the activity on the board too.

NOTE

Please collect the labelled objects made in this session and keep them safe.

This workshop is the first workshop which will explore animal grief. We will learn about how elephants are seen to show grief behaviour in the wild, create our own elephant masks and think about the phrases and language which can be helpful/unhelpful when supporting someone who is grieving.

This workshop is designed to help children understand useful language regarding death and grief, build a tool kit of phrases and better understand grief behaviour.



Warm up/check-in

2 MINUTES

- We're going to prepare for the workshops by giving the children the opportunity to pretend to be an animal while reflecting on something that brings them joy. The energy levels of the class may determine which of the following you choose.
- 'Meerkat Words' - Ask the children to think about one joyful moment from their day or week so far. They are then invited to share their moment of joy by popping up from their desks, like a meerkat, to give their answer. When done speaking the child sits down, signalling for other children to pop-up and share theirs.
- 'Quiet Mouse Words' - Ask the children to think about one joyful moment from their day or week so far. They are then invited to share their moment of joy whispering quietly to the person next to them, like quiet mice, to give their answer.

Recap of the project

3 MINUTES

- Recap some of what took place in the last workshop and the pictures and stories of our 'social animals'.
- Explain that today we're going to learn about elephants and how they show grief.
- Ask the children if they can remember what the word 'grief' means.
- A reminder that grief might include all kinds of emotions. Talking about death and grief can be upsetting so they can go to the break out space if they would like to.
- Ask the children, does anyone know the name for a group of elephants? (Answer: herd or parade).

- Explain that last week we learned that elephants like to spend time with each other by playing in water and sometimes they use their trunks for snorkelling. They use their trunks to pick up branches and leaves to eat and they squirt water through their nose.
- Invite the children to take a moment to do their best elephant impression.

Introduction to elephant grief

10 MINUTES

- Explain that elephants sense and experience the world very differently to humans, but just like humans, members of their herd are very important to them. When a herd member dies, sometimes their behaviour changes for a certain amount of time.
- Option to show the the children the BBC video 'Elephants Mourn Their Dead' via the QR code below.
- One of the ways that elephants change their behaviour is that they are sometimes seen to become a lot quieter and very still. They gather together, to sniff and nudge their dead herd member and have been seen to bury their dead in leaves. They've even been seen to do burials.
- Explain to the children that we're going to make and decorate our own elephant masks.

Watch video:
'Elephants Mourn Their Dead'

Cutting out/colouring in our masks

15 MINUTES

- Ask the children to cut out their masks and leaves and cellotape/glue their own elephant masks with curly big trunks! Then stick their lollystick or card to the mask, so it can be held like a masquerade mask. Note that if there is time, the children can colour their mask in.
- Write their name on the back of the mask. Teacher to keep items safe and labelled for the end of the workshops.

Leaves

10 MINUTES

- Explain that we are going to imagine that elephants can talk, and think about some things we might say or do to be a good friend to an elephant who is grieving.
- Use the presentation provided to show a list of leaf examples with ideas for looking after a grieving elephant.
- Using their masks, ask them to pretend to be elephants. As elephants, we will look at our leaves and think about which ones we think would be helpful for a grieving elephant and which are not helpful.
- Read out suggestions one by one and ask the children whether they think the ideas would be helpful. Some children might disagree, and that is okay, because everybody grieves in different ways. However we can all agree that it's not nice to ignore an elephant and perhaps it is best to ask an elephant how they feel.
- Using the examples on the presentation, encourage the children to write their favourite ideas onto the leaves, and add a few ideas of their own too. They will then stick the leaves onto their trunk.

Share at the end

10 MINUTES

- Ask children which of the phrases they think would help the elephant the most? Why did they choose this phrase? How do they think we should look after a grieving elephant?
- Reiterate that elephants and people like to be treated differently so you might have chosen different leaves. Highlight to children that we might all agree that we wouldn't like it if anyone said mean words, ignored or bullied our elephants. Perhaps it's always best to ask the elephant how they are feeling and what they might need.

Write in notebooks

5 MINUTES

- Ask children to write their favourite helpful suggestions and phrases into their notebooks.
- Let the children know that in the next session, we will be learning about grieving monkeys.



Listen to
'How to Look After a Grieving Elephant'

Check out

5 MINUTES

- Ask the children if they felt any specific emotion related to today's session. If they talk about sadness, or any other emotions, this is a good moment to thank the child for being honest, express how we might look after each other or consider whether an adult can talk to the child after the lesson for more support. It is helpful to remind the children that uncomfortable and comfortable emotions are all natural responses.
- 'Word Wave': Ask the children, if they can think of an emotion they are feeling in that moment. Do we feel happy or grumpy or peaceful or sad or excited, perhaps? Move your arm across the class and children to shout out words when it passes them.



Something to be mindful about

We have found that this second workshop can be the moment in which children begin to open up about personal experiences with grief, as this is the first time we delve deeper into the death, dying and grief conversation. Again, some children might express difficult emotional responses or ask difficult questions, so please refer to the guidance from Child Bereavement UK. See appendix.

Workshop 3:

How to Look After a Grieving Monkey

Exploring hugs and comfort



Workshop 3:

How to Look After a Grieving Monkey

Materials for the room

- The notebook and pen for all children.
- Cut out of monkey shapes.
- Felt.
- Glue or split pins.
- Scissors.
- A cosy break out space for any students who feel upset.
- How to Look After a Grieving Elephant presentation.
- **See appendix for:**
  - Template of pocket monkey.

Key vocabulary

tactile • troop • grounded

It may be helpful to write these words on the board and the word ‘monkey’ for spelling. It may help to add the steps of the activity on the board too.

NOTE

Please collect the labelled objects made in this session and keep them safe.

In this workshop we learn about how monkeys are seen to show grief behaviour in the wild. We will be talking about how hugs or tactile support can be helpful to some animals. Children will create a ‘pocket hug’ monkey that they can hug and play with.

This workshop is designed to help children understand one of the ways we can support each other or soothe ourselves (with hugs or cuddling a toy which they can keep).



Warm up/check-in

5 MINUTES

- 'Meerkat Words' - Ask the children to think about one joyful moment from their day or week so far. They are then invited to share their moment of joy by popping up from their desks, like a meerkat, to give their answer. When done speaking the child sits down, signalling for other children to pop-up and share theirs.
- 'Quiet Mouse Words' - Ask the children to think about one joyful moment from their day or week so far. They are then invited to share their moment of joy whispering quietly to the person next to them, like quiet mice, to give their answer.

Recap of the project

5 MINUTES

- Recap what took place in the last workshop and the pictures and stories of our 'social animals'. Also talk about the break out space.
- Today we're going to learn about monkeys and how they show grief.
- Ask the children if they can remember what the word 'grief' means.
- A reminder that grief might include all kinds of emotions. Talking about death and grief can be upsetting so they can go to the break out space if they would like to.
- Does anyone know the name for a group of monkeys? (Answer: troop).
- In the first session, we learned that monkeys like to spend time grooming each other and picking fleas from each other's hair. So we know they are social and they can be touch sensory.
- Optional moment to do your best monkey impression.

Introduction to Monkey Grief

10 MINUTES

- Monkeys sense and experience the world very differently to humans, but just like humans, members of their troop are very important to them. When a troop member dies, sometimes their behaviour changes for a certain amount of time.
- Option to show the video of langur monkeys. Before showing the video, it is useful to offer the children the context that the video depicts a robot monkey which the television company have used to record monkeys in the wild. The monkeys mistake the robot for a monkey who has died, and the video shows the way the monkeys grieve when they think a troop member has died.
- One of the ways that monkeys change their behaviour is that they are sometimes seen to cuddle each other and huddle together.
- Question - how does that make you feel? Do any of you like to have a hug when you're feeling very sad? This as an opportunity to normalise feeling sad and meet any uncomfortable emotions with "thank you for your honesty", really positively affirm that it's normal to feel grief and we're pleased to have this space where it's okay to express this.
- Task: we're going to make our own 'pocket hug' felt monkeys. It will be a toy which we will be able to hug and squeeze when we need to feel a bit grounded.

Watch video:
'Langur monkeys'

Creating our own 'pocket hug' monkeys

25 MINUTES

- Ask the children to cut out the monkey shape, with the felt provided, as well as cutting out the tummy, face and tail. Ask the children to stick their monkey shape together using glue and use felt pens to draw eyes and a mouth.
- During this time it is recommended that teaching staff take time to sit at each table, both to help the children with the activity, and also to have smaller group conversations in order to ask children whether they want to give their monkey a name, whether they like hugs and ways they like to comfort themselves when they feel sad.
- See appendix for pocket monkey template.

Questions to ask children

5 MINUTES

- What name would you give your monkey?
- Does everyone like hugs? Highlight to children that even if we do like hugs, sometimes we don't feel comfortable and it's okay to say 'no thank you'. Highlight that sometimes we like a toy to hug instead, so our monkey can be our hugging toy.
- Last workshop we shared ideas for how to look after a grieving elephant, how might we look after a grieving monkey?

Write in notebooks

5 MINUTES

- Ask children, how do we think we should look after a grieving monkey? Children to write their favourite helpful suggestions and phrases into their notebooks.
- Let the children know that in the next session we will be learning about grieving wolves.

Check out

5 MINUTES

- 'Word Wave': This is a good moment to ask the children if they felt any specific emotion related to what they learned today. If they talk about sadness, or any other uncomfortable emotions, this is a good moment to thank the child for being honest about their emotion, express how we might look after each other or consider whether an adult can talk to the child after the lesson for more support. Remind the children that any kind of emotions are all natural responses.
- 'Word Wave': Ask the children, if they can think of an emotion they are feeling in that moment. Do we feel happy or grumpy or peaceful or sad or excited, perhaps? Move your arm across the class and children to shout out words when it passes them.

Listen to:
'How to Look After a Grieving Monkey'

Workshop 4:

How to Look After a Grieving Wolf

Exploring alone time and personal space



Workshop 4:

How to Look After a Grieving Wolf

Materials for the room

- The notebook and pen for all children.
- Paper cups - 2 per child, attached together with 1 metre string, tied through holes in base.
- Stickers (white labels).
- Crayons/colouring pens.
- A cosy break out space for any students who feel upset.
- How to Look After a Grieving Elephant presentation.

Key vocabulary

personal space • pack • communicate

It may be helpful to write these words on the board and the word 'wolf' for spelling. It may help to add the steps of the activity on the board too.

NOTE

Please collect the labelled objects made in this session and keep them safe.

In this workshop we learn about how wolves are seen to show grief behaviour in the wild. We will be talking about how some animals like to have alone time when grieving. Children will create their own cup telephones to help them play together whilst maintaining their own personal space.

This workshop is designed to help children understand that one of the ways we may choose to soothe ourselves is through having alone time in private space. It will help children to understand and respect when people need a moment to be alone.



Warm up/check-in

5 MINUTES

- 'Meerkat Words' - Ask the children to think about one joyful moment from their day or week so far. They are then invited to share their moment of joy by popping up from their desks, like a meerkat, to give their answer. When done speaking the child sits down, signalling for other children to pop-up and share theirs.
- 'Quiet Mouse Words' - Ask the children to think about one joyful moment from their day or week so far. They are then invited to share their moment of joy whispering quietly to the person next to them, like quiet mice, to give their answer.

Recap of the project

5 MINUTES

- Recap what took place in the last workshop and the pictures and stories of our 'social animals'. Also talk about the break out space.
- At this half way stage, it is useful to remind the children that we have three sessions remaining and to celebrate their progress.
- Today we're going to learn about wolves and how they show grief.
- Ask the children if they can remember what the word 'grief' means.
- A reminder that grief might include all kinds of emotions. Talking about death and grief can be upsetting so they can go to the break out space if they would like to.
- Does anyone know the name for a group of wolves? (Answer: pack)
- In the first session, we learned that wolves like to spend time communicating with each other - through sound (like howling), smell (like rolling in the grass) and body language. So we know they're social and like to communicate with each other.
- Optional moment to do our best wolf impression.

Introduction to wolf grief

10 MINUTES

- Introduce the children to the idea that wolves sense and experience the world very differently to humans but just like humans, members of their pack are very important to them. When a pack member dies sometimes their behaviour changes for a certain amount of time.
- One of the ways that wolves change their behaviour is that they are seen to tuck their tail between their legs and their howl changes. They don't seem to howl as a group any more, they howl by themselves. They want to have time alone and to communicate in a way which is private to them.
- Ask the children, how does that make us feel? Do any of us like to have time alone when we feel sad? Note this as an opportunity to normalise feeling sad. Any difficult emotions should be met with "thank you for your honesty", this positively affirms that it's normal to feel grief and we're pleased to have this space where it's okay to express this.
- Explain task - we're going to make our own private wolf telephones which we can howl into. It means that we can be far apart from each other, in our own space but still communicate.

Listen to:
'How to Look After a Grieving Wolf'

Decorating our own private telephones to howl or talk into

15 MINUTES

- Start by decorating white sticker labels, with pictures inspired by activities they enjoy doing when they are having alone time. In order to keep the children focused, we recommend that they decorate white sticker labels, which can later be attached to their cups, rather than immediately sharing the telephone cup toy with the children.
- During this time, it is recommended that teaching staff take time to sit at each table both to help the children with the activity and to have smaller group conversations. Ask children whether they like to have alone time sometimes and what activities they like to do when they are by themselves (such as reading a book, for example).
- Finally, offer a telephone set to each child so they can decorate their telephone with the stickers and write their name on the base for safe keeping.

Try out the telephone!

10 MINUTES

- Place the children in pairs and name each pair as A & B. Pairs can test both sets of telephones. For this to work the string between the telephones needs to be taut which means we can be far apart from each other. In our own space but still communicating.
- Telephone games could include asking the children to say an activity they like to do when they're alone (like reading a book or playing a game or practicing a sport) and see if their partner can hear what they said down the phone.

Share at the end and ask questions

5 MINUTES

- Do we ever like to have alone time if we're feeling sad? Remind the children that there is a difference between someone choosing to have alone time and ignoring someone/leaving them out, and it is always okay to ask what people want.
- Last sessions we had ideas for looking after a grieving elephant and monkey. How might we look after a grieving wolf?

Write in notebooks

5 MINUTES

- Ask children which activities they enjoy doing when they are having alone time. Invite them to write their favourite helpful suggestions into their notebooks.
- Let the children know that in the next session, we will be learning about grieving whales.

Check out

5 MINUTES

- 'Word Wave': Ask the children if they can think of an emotion they are feeling in that moment. Do we feel happy or grumpy or peaceful or sad or excited, perhaps? Move your arm across the class and children to shout out words when it passes them.
- If they talk about sadness, or any other uncomfortable emotions, thank the child for being honest about their difficult emotion, express how we might look after each other or consider whether an adult can talk to the child after the lesson for more support. Remind the children that uncomfortable and comfortable emotions are all natural emotions.



Something to be mindful about

By now, we will have had three different animal grief responses: one which is about gathering together and really taking time to notice and talk about death, another which involves hugging and another which is about being alone. It is useful to remind the children of these different responses and reflect that both animals and humans act differently in response to bereavement.

Workshop 5:

How to Look After a Grieving Whale

Exploring how we keep memories



Workshop 5:

How to Look After a Grieving Whale

Materials for the room

- The notebook and pen for all children.
- A jar for each child.
- Salt for each child.
- Cotton balls.
- Coloured chalk.
- Paper luggage tags.
- An aprons for each child.
- A cosy break out space for any students who feel upset.
- Sticky labels.
- How to Look After a Grieving Elephant presentation.

Key vocabulary

tactile • sensory • memento • pod

It may be helpful to write these words on the board and the word 'whale' for spelling. It may help to add the steps of the activity on the board too.

NOTE

Please collect the labelled objects made in this session and keep them safe.

In this workshop we learn about how whales are seen to show grief behaviour in the wild. We will be talking about how some animals like to hold on to something of the animal who has died. For humans this could be an items like a jumper or a photograph. In this workshop we will make salt jars which capture the memories of someone important to us.

This workshop is designed to introduce the concept of remembering a loved one and normalise how we might choose to hold on to their memories. The activity itself is designed to be meditative and soothing.



Watch video:
'How to make your salt jar'

Warm up/check-in

5 MINUTES

- 'Meerkat Words' - Ask the children to think about one joyful moment from their day or week so far. They are then invited to share their moment of joy by popping up from their desks, like a meerkat, to give their answer. When done speaking the child sits down, signalling for other children to pop-up and share theirs.
- 'Quiet Mouse Words' - Ask the children to think about one joyful moment from their day or week so far. They are then invited to share their moment of joy whispering quietly to the person next to them, like quiet mice, to give their answer.

Recap of the project

5 MINUTES

- Recap what took place in the last workshop and the pictures and stories of our 'social animals'. Also talk about the break out space.
- Explain to the children that today we're going to learn about whales and how they show grief.
- Ask the children if they can remember what the word 'grief' means.
- A reminder that grief might include all kinds of emotions. Talking about death and grief can be upsetting so they can step outside go to the break out space if they would like to.
- Ask the children if anyone knows the name for a group of whales? (Answer: pod)
- Highlight that in the first session, we learned that whales like to spend time swimming together and also playing with seaweed like a sensory toy. So we know they like to spend time with each other and can be tactile.
- Optional moment to do our best whale impression.

Introduction to whale grief

10 MINUTES

- As a class, discuss if we like to hold on to mementos of a person important to us (an object helps people remember something or someone). For example, do you have any photos of friends or family?
- Tell the children that whales sense and experience the world very differently to humans, but just like humans, members of their pod are very important to them.
- Explain that with whales, when a pod member dies, sometimes their behaviour changes for a certain amount of time. When one of their pod dies they might hold onto them for a while before letting them go.
- Sometimes after a human dies, we show that we care by finding a way to keep those people close to us too - we might keep ashes so they can be scattered, or we might keep a memento such as a special jumper or a photograph. So today we are going to create mementos, something we can hold which acts as a reminder of someone important.
- Explain task - tell the children that today we're going to make salt jars which capture a memory of someone important to us. This person might be alive or might have died. Alternatively, we might make a jar about a pet who is living or has died.
- How does this make us feel? Do we ever remember people, by keeping photographs of them or keepsakes, for example? This is an opportunity to normalise feeling sad.

Listen to:
'How to Look After a Grieving Whale'

Making our own object to keep safe: salt jars

25 MINUTES

- Begin by watching the instructional video included in the presentation provided about how to colour the salt with chalk, then talk through the steps before distributing a jar to each child. Note that it can help for a teacher to demonstrate the process, offering an example jar which relates to a person important to the teacher's life and explaining the meaning behind the colours.
- Ask the children to think about someone who is important to them and make a salt jar which represents memories about that person or animal.
- Prepare a jar filled with salt for each child.
- Encourage the children to pour all of the salt out into different piles on paper. We recommend asking the children to create 3 piles or salt (on 3 sets of paper) for time and space purposes.
- Pick a colour to represent a memory of their person or something they like (maybe if they like nature and walking and playing in trees they might pick a green colour).
- Children should roll the selected colour chalk into one of the piles of salt to make the salt that colour. Then pour it into the jar.
- Choose another colour and repeat until the jar is full of different coloured salt - full of memories and stories about that person or animal.
- Keep reminding the children that the colours chosen should have some connection to the person or animal. Prompt the children to think about what memories we would like to hold onto and capture.
- When the jar is nearly full, the children may wish to place a cotton bud on the top to make sure it's really full, so that the sand doesn't shuffle in the jar.
- Invite the children to use the sticky label to write their name and stick it on the bottom of the jar.
- During this time it is recommended that teaching staff take time to sit at each table to help the children with the activity, and to have smaller group conversations. Ask the children what the colours might represent. For example, does their person have a favourite colour, might the person have a favourite activity which connects to a colour?
- This is an opportunity to ask if they have any other special family traditions to remember loved ones. Different cultures deal with grief and death through different rituals.

Share at the end

5 MINUTES

- Can we see what you made? Are there any stories you would like to share?

Write in notebooks

5 MINUTES

- Ask children if they can write about why they chose the 3 colours for their salt jars and what they mean. Often children will speak about their special person's favourite colours, memories about their time together, or colours related to stories in the child's life, which they would love to be able to share with their special person.
- Let the children know that in the next session we will be learning about grieving giraffes.

Check out

5 MINUTES

- 'Word Wave': Ask the children, if they can think of an emotion they are feeling in that moment. Do we feel happy or grumpy or peaceful or sad or excited, perhaps? Move your arm across the class and children to shout out words when it passes them.
- If they talk about sadness or any other emotions, thank the child for being honest about their emotion, express how we might look after each other or consider whether an adult can talk to the child after the lesson for more support, and also to remind the children that uncomfortable and comfortable emotions are all natural emotions.
- Please collect the labelled objects made in this session to keep safe, ensuring that they don't become muddled.

Something to be mindful about

This could be the first time the group reflect on the death of a human or animal in their lives as we are speaking directly about mementoes and people who are special to us. Please be gentle.

We have deliberately waited until workshop 5 before inviting a space in which children might talk about an experience of death in their own lives.

At this stage, the group will have had time to grow in confidence and feel more comfortable when speaking about death together. This may still bring up difficult memories and it is important to remember we never force children to talk about their personal death experiences, we respond with kindness if they choose to.



Workshop 6:

How to Look After a Grieving Giraffe

Exploring memorial sites



Workshop 6:

How to Look After a Grieving Giraffe

Materials for the room

- The notebook and pen for all children.
- A large pebble stone for each child (plus a few spares).
- Paint pens or sharpies.
- An apron for each child.
- A painted pebble to demonstrate.
- A cosy break out space for any students who feel upset.
- How to Look After a Grieving Elephant presentation.

Key vocabulary

vigil • monument • memorial • funeral • giraffe

It may be helpful to write these words on the board and the word 'giraffe' for spelling. It may help to add the steps of the activity on the board too.

NOTE

Please collect the labelled objects made in this session and keep them safe.

In this workshop we learn about how giraffes are seen to show grief behaviour in the wild. We will be talking about how some animals like to gather together to have vigils or funerals after an important animal dies. We will be making pebble stones which can act as our mini monument and memorial site to someone or something important.

We created this workshop to help children further explore the concept of memorialising someone and explore the idea that we could place our pebbles somewhere important for us to visit and reflect.



Warm up/check-in

5 MINUTES

- 'Meerkat Words' - Ask the children to think about one joyful moment from their day or week so far. They are then invited to share their moment of joy by popping up from their desks, like a meerkat, to give their answer. When done speaking the child sits down, signalling for other children to pop-up and share theirs.
- 'Quiet Mouse Words' - Ask the children to think about one joyful moment from their day or week so far. They are then invited to share their moment of joy whispering quietly to the person next to them, like quiet mice, to give their answer.

Recap of the project

5 MINUTES

- Recap what took place in the last workshop and the pictures and stories of our 'social animals'. Also talk about the break out space.
- Today we're going to learn about giraffes and how they show grief.
- Ask the children if they can remember what the word 'grief' means.
- A reminder that grief might include all kinds of emotions. Talking about death and grief can be upsetting so they can go to the break out space if they would like to.
- Does anyone know the name for a group of Giraffes? (Answer: herd – or a journey or a tower)
- In the first session, we learned that giraffes like to spend time eating together and walking together, so we know they are social.
- Optional moment to do our best 'giraffe chomping leaves' impression.
- In this moment, it is also useful to remind the children that the next session will be the final session.

Introduction to giraffe grief

10 MINUTES

- Today we're going to learn about giraffes and how they show grief.
- Giraffes sense and experience the world very differently to humans but just like humans, members of their tower are very important to them. When a member of their tower dies, sometimes their behaviour changes for a certain amount of time.
- One of the ways that giraffes change their behaviour is that they are seen to gather together and stand by their dead herd member as though in a vigil (a bit like a funeral).
- Question - how does this make us feel? Have we ever been to a memorial site before, or a funeral? Can we remember what this looked like? Note this as an opportunity to normalise feeling sad. Any emotions met with "thank you for your honesty" really positively affirms that it's normal to feel grief and we're pleased to have this space where it's okay to express this. It's important that we don't force anyone to share anything they would not like to.
- Explain the task: we're going to make our own memorial nature stones which we will decorate and they can be placed somewhere important.

Listen to
'How to Look After a Grieving Giraffe'

Pebble painting

20 MINUTES

- Ask the children to reflect back onto the last session when we made salt jars about an important person or pet. Ask them to think about a picture they could draw which makes them think of that person or pet. For example with WWI Memorials, we often see pictures of poppies which make us think of the soldiers of WWI. Can we think of a picture which makes us remember that person/animal? For example, did they like nature or fishing? Was there a special meal they cooked?
- Ask the children to collect a stone and on one side of the pebble, they can draw this special picture.
- Once the children have drawn their picture, they can let the pebble dry for a moment and turn the pebble over to write a name, a memory or a special message on the other side.
- During this time it is recommended that teaching staff take time to sit at each table, both to help the children with the activity, and also to have smaller group conversations in order to ask children whether they have ever attended a memorial and what that experience felt like.

Share at the end

5 MINUTES

- In talking partners, ask the children to show each other the design of their stone and the words that they chose.

Something to be mindful about

Some children become emotionally attached to making their pebble as perfect as possible, so it may be helpful to have spare pebbles.

Write in notebooks

10 MINUTES

- Ask the children where they might like to keep their pebble when they take it home - where might be a nice place to put their pebble so they can visit the pebble and think of their special person. This might be a place in their room, a garden or graveside.
- Ask the children to write a sentence or draw a picture to reflect on where they will be placing their pebble.
- This is a good moment to have a recap about all of the animals we have learned about and the activities which took place. Next week is the last session and afterwards everyone will be able to take their objects home.

Check out activity

5 MINUTES

- 'Word Wave': Ask the children, if they can think of an emotion they are feeling in that moment. Do we feel happy or grumpy or peaceful or sad or excited, perhaps? Move your arm across the class and children to shout out words when it passes them.
- If they talk about sadness, or any other uncomfortable emotions, thank the child for being honest about their difficult emotion. Express how we might look after each other or consider whether an adult can talk to the child after the lesson for more support. Remind the children that uncomfortable and comfortable emotions are all natural emotions.

Workshop 7:

How to Look After a Grieving Crow

Creating a self care collection and a final celebration



Workshop 7:

How to Look After a Grieving Crow

Materials for the room

- The notebook and pen for all children.
- A box for everyone in the room (this could be a shoe box, delivery box or cereal box, but it is helpful that all children have a similar sized box). The children could be asked to bring this in from home, but it would be useful to have spares.
- Paper.
- All of the objects which the children have made.
- A cosy break out space for any students who feel upset.
- Picnic food items (optional).
- How to Look After a Grieving Elephant presentation.
- **See appendix for:**
  - Picnic blanket sheet (photocopy for each child).

Key vocabulary

self-care • precious • hordes • rememberance • wake • vigil

It may be helpful to write these words on the board and the word 'crow' for spelling. It may help to add the steps of the activity on the board too.

NOTE

Please collect the labelled objects made in this session and keep them safe.

This is our final workshop and an opportunity to collect all of the items we have made, all of the ideas we have shared and gather them together into our own Crow Care Collection. This is a great opportunity to congratulate all of the children for their investigations and perhaps celebrate with a real picnic of crisps and cake!

In this workshop we learn about how crows are seen to show grief behaviour in the wild and how they also like to gather crow hordes to witness a death in their community. Reflecting on crow's tendency to store food and how young crows tendency to store play 'toys'. We will decorate a box to gather together all of our resources from the last workshops as well as thinking of other self-care suggestions for our Crow Care Collection.

We created this workshop to help children look back on all of the grief support techniques we have explored and add any new self-care suggestions. The Crow Care Collection can be a resource for children to return back to if they find themselves struggling with grief or wanting to support someone else.

Listen to
'How to Look After a Grieving Crow'

Warm up/check-in

5 MINUTES

- 'Meerkat Words' - Ask the children to think about one joyful moment from their day or week so far. They are then invited to share their moment of joy by popping up from their desks, like a meerkat, to give their answer. When done speaking the child sits down, signalling for other children to pop-up and share theirs.
- 'Quiet Mouse Words' - Ask the children to think about one joyful moment from their day or week so far. They are then invited to share their moment of joy whispering quietly to the person next to them, like quiet mice, to give their answer.

Recap of the project

5 MINUTES

- Recap what took place in the last workshop and the pictures and stories of our 'social animals'. Also talk about the break out space.
- Today we're going to learn about crows and how they show grief.
- Ask the children if they can remember what the word 'grief' means.
- A reminder that grief might include different emotions. A reminder that talking about death and grief can be upsetting so they can step outside for the break out space if they would like to.
- Does anyone know the name for a group of crows? (Answer: a murder, horde, or even a parliament).
- In the first session, we learned that crows collect and hide food and sometimes young crows do the same with toys such as acorn shells. So we know crows often store important things away so they can find them later. We also know that crows are social and like to spend time together.
- Optional moment to do our best crow impression.

Introduction to Crow Grief

10 MINUTES

- Today we're going to learn about crows and how they show grief.
- Crows sense and experience the world very differently to humans but just like humans, members of their horde are very important to them. When a member of the horde dies sometimes their behaviour changes for a certain amount of time.
- One of the ways that crows behave after the death of their horde member is that they can call out to other crows telling them to fly towards them and the dead crow. They have been seen to gather around the dead crow, a little like a vigil.
- Question: how does this make us feel? Have we ever been to a funeral or a wake before, or held a minute's silence at school for Remembrance Day? This as an opportunity to normalise feeling sad. Any emotions met with "thank you for your honesty" positively affirms that it's normal to feel grief and we're pleased to have this space where it's okay to express this. It's important that we don't force anyone to share anything they would not like to.
- Returning back to the crow's impulse to gather together and collect resources, explain the task. As this is our last session, we are going to celebrate all the brilliant work we have made together. We know that collecting food and resources is important to crows so today we're going to gather together all of the objects we have made and celebrate with a picnic.
- Demonstrate to the children how they can decorate their boxes and add ideas to a Crow Care Collection picnic blanket sheet with suggestions for looking after grieving crows.
- This box is going to become their Crow Care Collection. They can keep these boxes safe and go back to find them in the future if ever they need help because they or a friend feel sad. Or they can just take them home and play with them.

Decorating our boxes

10 MINUTES

- Decorate the boxes with pictures, making them personal to the children. Depending on the style of the box, it might help to cut scrap paper and crepe paper which can be glued to a box. If you are using a cereal box, it might be useful to pre-cut a lid or cut boxes in half to make a basket.

Create our picnic blanket

10 MINUTES

- Children are provided with a 'Crow Care Collection' picnic blanket sheet with spaces for the children to write other self-care suggestions. Encourage the children to write suggestions of things which bring them comfort before placing this sheet, along with all of our objects into their picnic box. Children can keep this box and all of the objects to help them in the future.
- This is will also be an opportunity to remind ourselves of all of the objects we have made and why.
- Elephants for ideas about how to treat grieving animals and ourselves.
- Monkeys remind us that it's normal to want a cuddle.
- Wolves to remind us that it's normal to want time alone.
- Whales to remind us that it's helpful to remember people important to us.
- Giraffes to remind us that memorial sites and funerals can be really important to us when we are grieving.
- Crows inspire us to think about collecting a care collection and keeping these care ideas safe.
- During this time it is recommended that teaching staff take time to sit at each table to help the children with the activity, and to have smaller group conversations. Ask children what other activities they would like to include in their Crow Care Collection.

Have our picnic!

10 MINUTES

- This is a moment to provide the children with all of the objects they made, and a packet of crisps or sweets. We can take a moment to eat a snack and have a juice together and celebrate all of the things we have learned and made together.

Share at the end

5 MINUTES

- Ask the children to share what they made and explain their design choices. Ask them how they think we should look after a grieving crow? Did they add those ideas to their blanket?

Check out activity

5 MINUTES

- A moment to say that children are welcome to talk to any of the teachers in the future if they need grief support, or they can talk to Child Bereavement UK (see Advice & Support page).
- Word Wave: Ask the children, if they can think of an emotion they are feeling in that moment. Do we feel happy or grumpy or peaceful or sad or excited, perhaps? Move your arm across the class and children to shout out words when it passes them.
- If they talk about sadness, or any other emotions, thank the child for being honest about their difficult emotion. Express how we might look after each other or consider whether an adult can talk to the child after the lesson for more support. Remind the children that uncomfortable and comfortable emotions are all natural emotions.

About the project

How to Look After a Grieving Elephant (and Other Social Animals) was originally created by artist Jenny Gaskell with young people who have experienced bereavement the project was commissioned and produced by Heart of Glass and Wonder Arts.



Hosted at Willowbrook Hospice in St Helens, with the support of Child Bereavement UK, the young people we worked with had already received dedicated bereavement support with these organisations and were able to safely bring their experience and their creativity to each session.

During this pilot programme, we asked the children and young people to give us their advice about how to look after different grieving animals at the end of each session. Their advice was used to create The Grief Helpline for Social Animals. This telephone hotline travelled around libraries and public spaces in St Helens and Knowsley 2024-2025.

After working with the hospice young people, the workshops were adapted for a school setting working with year 3 pupils and teachers at Allanson Street Primary School in St. Helens.

Based on 'The Grief Helpline for Social Animals', the illustrated Audio Scripts Book was produced alongside this resource, which you can view via the QR code below.

Download:
The Grief Helpline for Social Animals (PDF)

Advice and support

If someone important to you has died, you might be feeling lots of different things. Feeling sad? Confused? Angry? Or maybe you've been feeling good sometimes? That's all okay. You're not alone.

Child Bereavement UK are there to help you to understand and manage your grief and feelings. Through the link below you will find activities, experiences from other grieving children and advice from their bereavement specialists.

If you'd like to speak to someone about your grief, our team of bereavement specialists are available to speak with right away, no need to book an appointment or join a wait list. You're welcome to reach out as much as you need.

Get support from:

childbereavementuk.org

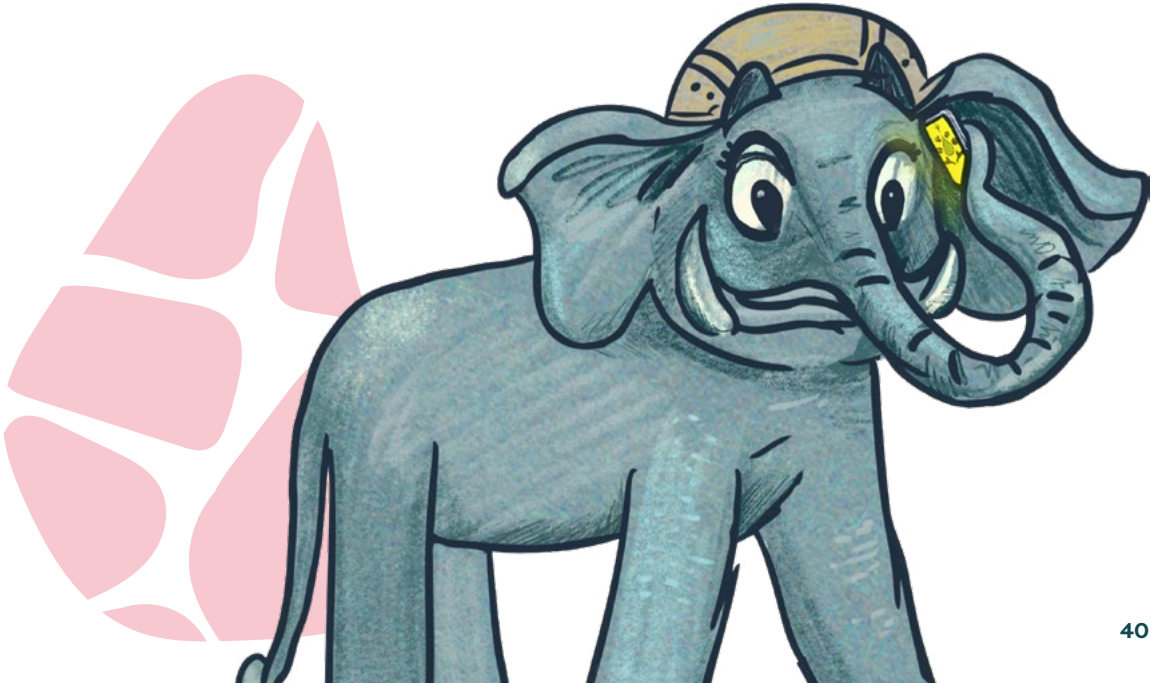
Child Bereavement UK
REBUILDING LIVES TOGETHER

Resource Feedback

We would welcome feedback regarding your experiences of engaging with the How to Look After a Grieving Elephant (and Other Social Animals) resource.

Please share your experiences, including examples and images of work created with the resource to:

jenny@jennygaskell.com
info@heartofglass.org.uk



Credits and thank yous

We would like to give a huge heartfelt thank you to all involved in How to Look After a Grieving Elephant (and Other Social Animals).



How to Look After a Grieving Elephant (and Other Social Animals) was created by artist Jenny Gaskell, commissioned by Heart of Glass and Wonder Arts, created in close collaboration with children who have experienced grief, Child Bereavement UK, Willowbrook Hospice and Allanson Street Primary School in St Helens.

The school's resource and book were designed by Cultivate Creative, illustrated by Macy Lowry Cassells Lee and Johanna Wilson.

The audio art work 'The Grief Helpline for Social Animals' was created as part of the pilot project by Jenny scripted the helpline with children who had experienced bereavement, during their workshops together at Willowbrook Hospice, St Helens. The audio was recorded by the Wonder Arts youth group; Young Wonders, and the audio was produced by Serafin Dinges, featuring the song Poppyseed by Podington Bear.

A huge thank you to all of the young people who have helped shape this project: Willowbrook Hospice young people: Mia, Savannah, Oliver, Aria, Emma and Jack. Young Wonders: Abi, Tom, Mia, Eli, Ella and Arthur. Allanson Street Primary School pupils.

A huge thank you to Danny Woods, Rhyannon Parry, Helen Heeney, Jane Knowles, Sophie Cartwright, Pia Brown, Allison Reid and Michelle Colquitt, who were integral to hosting, supporting and bringing their expertise to the workshops throughout their development.

Heart of Glass is a Merseyside-based community arts organisation that brings artists and communities together to make art.

Wonder Arts is a charity that provides access to world-class arts experiences for children, young people and families.

Credits and thank yous



Jenny Gaskell

Jenny Gaskell is an artist who creates performances and participatory art work. Jenny's work involves writing, hosting, listening, making audio, designing rituals and thinking about how to hold various types of grief. Jenny regularly designs projects within hospice settings across the North West.

For more details see:

jennygaskell.com



Macy Lowry Cassells Lee

31st March 2000 – 17th August 2026

In memory of Macy Lowry Cassells Lee

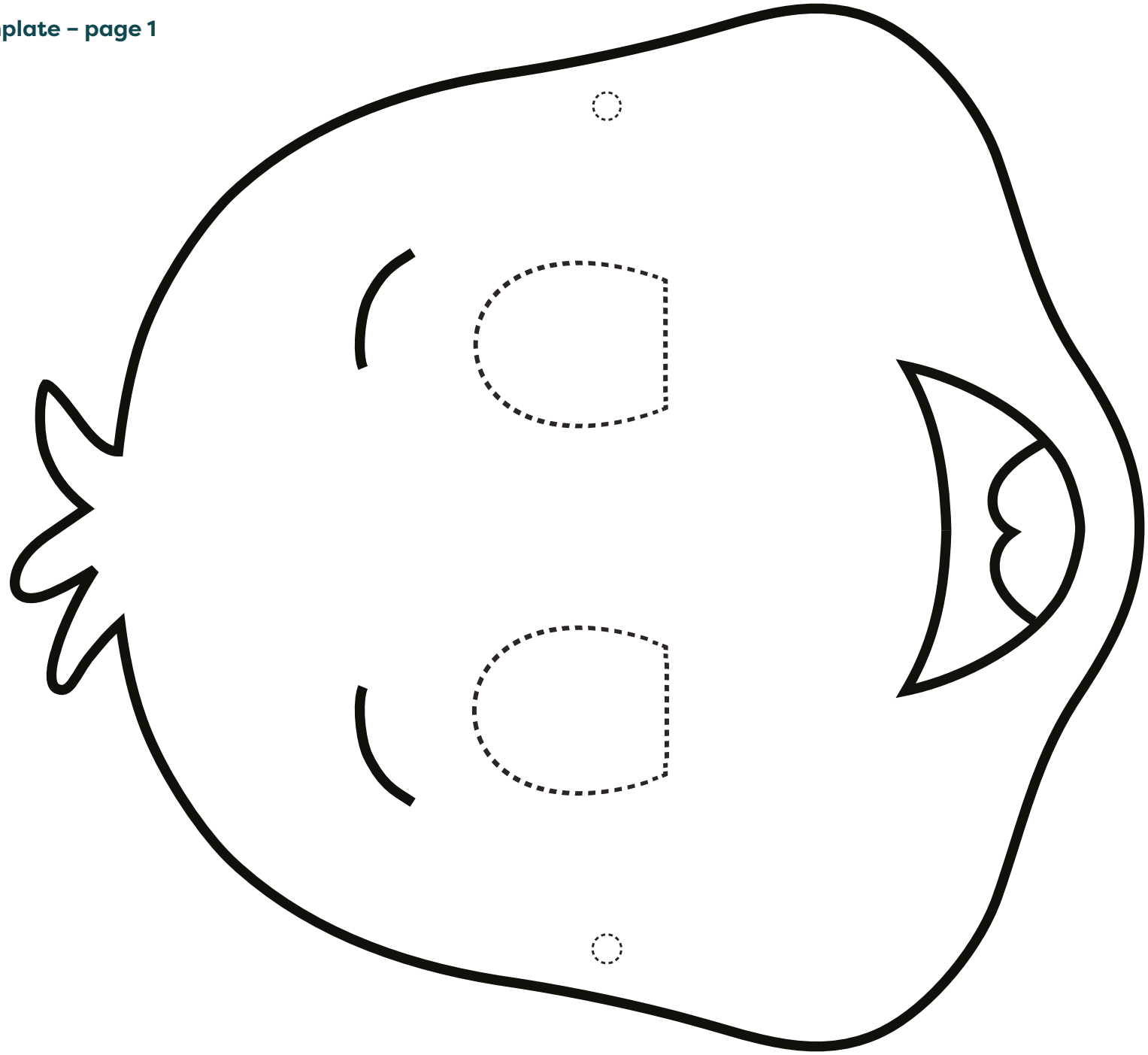
Macy brought her extraordinary creativity, kindness, and care to this project. Through her beautiful illustrations, she helped bring the world of the Grieving Elephant and Other Social Animals to life, sharing her imagination and helping to tell a story about connection, compassion and looking after one another.

We are deeply honoured to share Macy's work and sincerely grateful for the love, creativity, and heart she gave to this project. Her illustrations will remain a beautiful part of this resource and a lasting reminder of her special contribution.

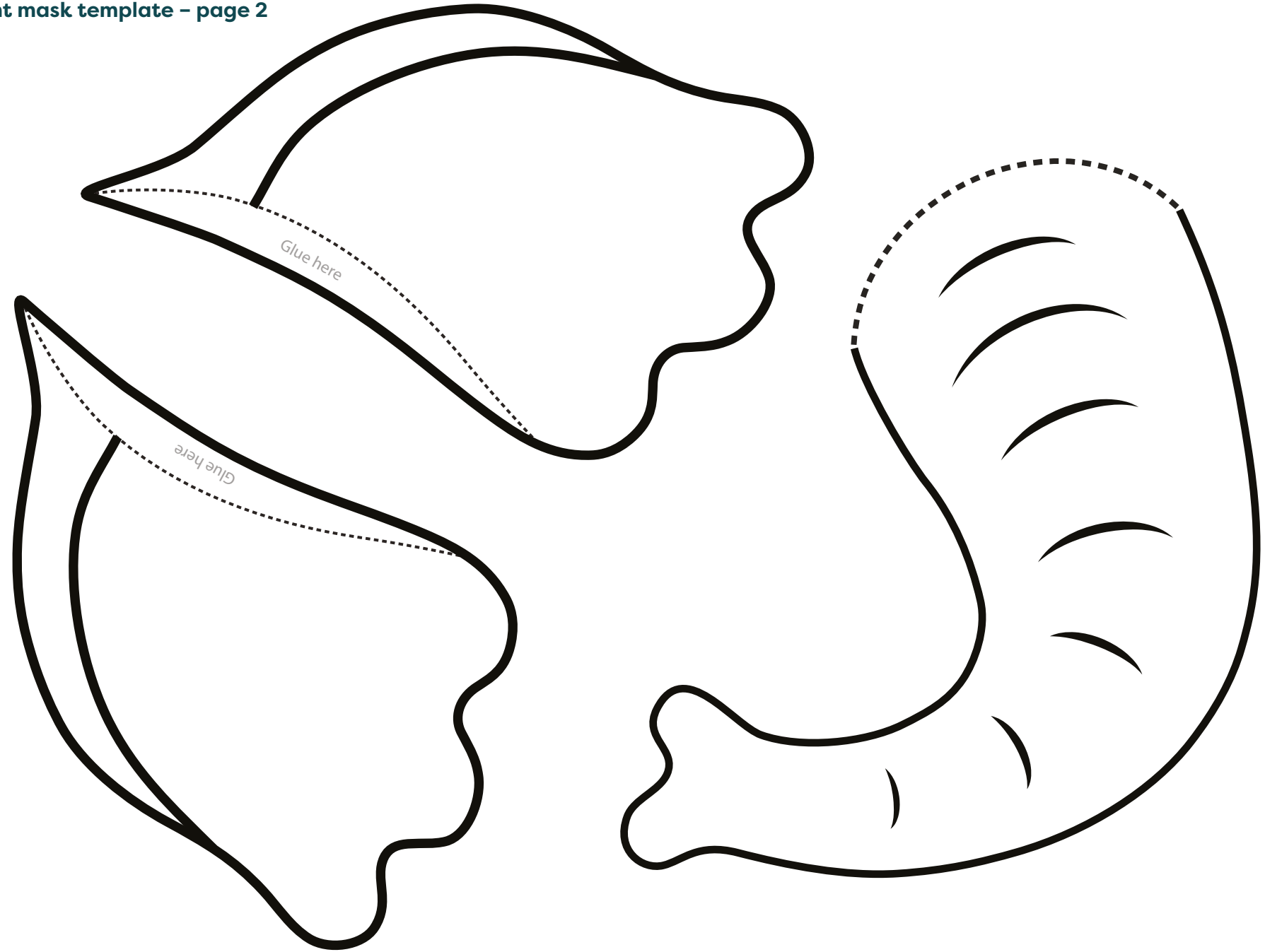
Macy's creativity touched this project in a way we will never forget. We hope that, through her work, a little of her light and kindness will continue to reach others and inspire us all to care for one another.

With love, and always remembered.

Appendix:
Elephant mask template – page 1



Appendix:
Elephant mask template – page 2



Appendix:
Leaves template – without suggestions



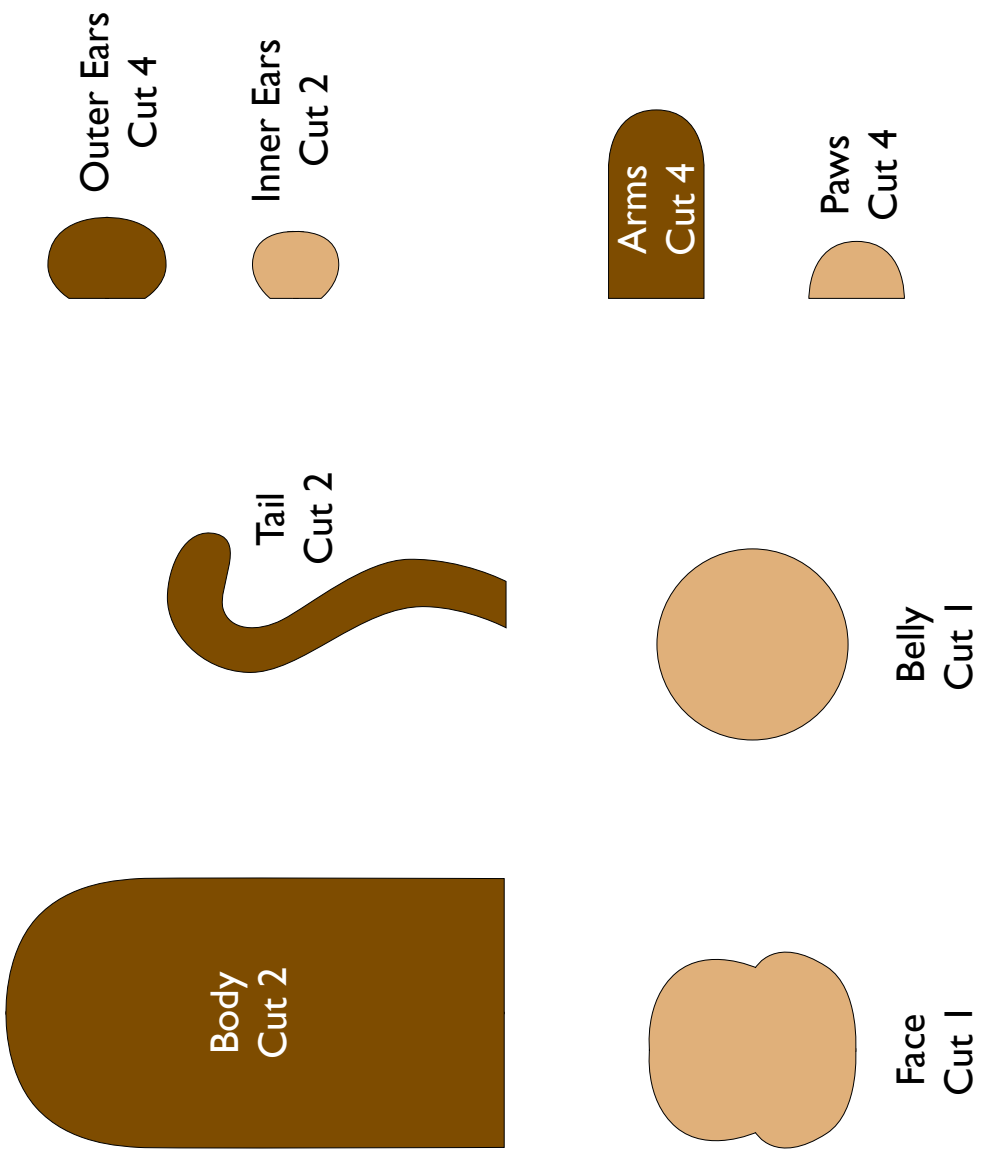
Appendix:
Leaves template – with suggestions



Appendix:
Leaves template – with suggestions



Appendix:
Pocket monkey template



CROW CARE COLLECTION

Dear Parent/ Carer,

We are writing to let you know about a special project we are running in your child's class; 'How to Look After A Grieving Elephant (and Other Social Animals)'.

From September 2026, the Department for Education updated its guidelines to include the subject of grief into the national curriculum. Teaching children about death and loss can help build resilience and break the silence and stigma that too often surround grief.

Over the course of seven weeks starting on INSERT DATE we are going to explore the topic of grief and loss in an age appropriate, child friendly way, providing the children with creative outlets for expressing and processing their emotions. This project aims to not only inform young people about grief but also open important conversations around loss and how to cope with these feelings which, unfortunately many of our children will feel at some point in their lives – or indeed may already have done.

This project was originally created by artist Jenny Gaskell with young people who have experienced bereavement, commissioned and produced by Heart of Glass and Wonder Arts.

Hosted at Willowbrook Hospice in St Helens, with the support of Child Bereavement UK, the young people we worked with had already received dedicated bereavement support with these organisations and were able to safely bring their experience and their creativity to each session.

During this pilot programme, the children were asked to give their advice about how to look after different grieving animals at the end of each session. Their advice was used to create an 'Animal Grief Hotline' which provides a wealth of information on how social animals experience grief, how to look after ourselves, and each other too. You are welcome to listen to at Heart of Glass | How to Look After a Grieving Elephant (and other….

After working with the children at the hospice, the workshops have been adapted for a school setting working with year 3 pupils and teachers at Allanson Street Primary School in St. Helens.

All sessions are handled with care, particularly for those children who have already suffered a bereavement. The children will learn about grief and loss and the strategies we can use to help ease these feelings by learning about the way that social animals such as elephants, giraffes and wolves each deal with loss. From this, the children will then create items which can be kept in a basket in class which the children can then use if they ever feel sad or worried.

When talking about grief and loss, please note that no personal stories need to be shared unless a child wants to do so.

If you would like to know more, please don't hesitate to get in touch and we can share the Teacher's Resource with you.

Thank you for your time, and for your support with this thoughtful and important opportunity for your child.

Many thanks and very best wishes.

Appendix:
The Grief Helpline for Social Animals

What is Grief?

What is grief?

Grief is a natural response to a loss or big change in your life. We experience grief when someone important to us dies, but we can also experience a sense of loss in reaction to things like falling out with a friend or changing schools.

Just like other social animals, humans experience and feel grief in lots of ways. We can often have lots of different and confusing feelings, like feeling angry, very tearful, shocked, worried or numb.

If you are grieving, it can help to talk to someone you trust.

We hope that some of these tips for looking after grieving animals, might help you look after yourself or a friend too.

How to Look After a Grieving Elephant

Welcome to the grief helpline for social animals!

How to look after a grieving Elephant!

Elephants are a social animal, they spend a lot of time in a group of other elephants. A group of elephants is called a herd.

Young elephants like to play in the water and have even been seen to go snorkelling with their trunks!

When an elephant dies, members of their elephant herd are sometimes seen to change the way they act, some scientists think this is because they're grieving.

Grieving elephants have been seen to take a pause to notice and sniff their dead herd member. They might become more quiet and still. Sometimes elephants even bury their dead herd member with leaves.

If you ever meet a grieving elephant, you can be a good friend by:

- Asking them how they're feeling
- Offering snacks
- And telling them the truth

And remember:
Don't wind them up!

And thank you for being a good friend!

How to Look After a Grieving Monkey

Welcome to the grief helpline for social animals!

How to look after a grieving Monkey!

Monkeys are social animals, they spend a lot of time in a group of other monkeys. A group of monkeys is called a troop.

Monkeys like to socialise by grooming each other and picking fleas out of each other's hair.

When a monkey dies, members of their monkey troop are sometimes seen to change the way they behave, some scientists think this is because they're grieving.

Grieving monkeys have been seen to gather together around the dead monkey and to hug and cuddle each other.

If you meet a grieving monkey, you can be a good friend by:

- Giving them a hug
- Telling them it's okay to be sad
- Or telling your favourite story of the monkey who has died

And remember:
Don't leave anyone out!

Thank you for being a good friend!

How to Look After a Grieving Wolf

Welcome to the grief helpline for social animals!

How to look after a grieving Wolf!

Wolves are social animals, they spend a lot of time in a group of other wolves. A group of wolves is called a pack.

Wolves like to talk to each other by howling together and rolling in the grass.

When a wolf dies, members of their wolf pack are sometimes seen to change the way they behave, some scientists think this is because they're grieving.

Grieving wolves have been seen to tuck their tail between their legs, become much quieter and take time alone to howl by themselves, instead of in a group.

If you meet a grieving wolf, you can be a good friend by letting wolves have time alone to:

- Listen to music
- Go for a walk in a park
- Or read a book - like The Diary of a Wimpy Kid

And remember:
Howwlllllllllll!

Thank you for being a good friend!

How to Look After a Grieving Whale

Welcome to the grief helpline for social animals!

How to look after a grieving Whale!

Whales are social animals, they spend a lot of time in a group of other whales. A group of whales is called a pod.

Whales like to spend time swimming together and also playing with seaweed like a sensory toy

When a whale dies, members of their whale pod are sometimes seen to change the way they behave, some scientists think this is because they're grieving.

Grieving whales have sometimes been seen to hold onto the whale who has died.

If you meet a grieving whale, you can be a good friend by:

- Offering them something to hold like a squishy toy
- A hot water bottle
- Or a teddy

And remember:
You can write your favourite stories of the whale who died, even if it's just for you to keep.

Thank you for being a good friend!

How to Look After a Grieving Giraffe

Welcome to the grief helpline for social animals!

How to look after a grieving Giraffe!

Giraffes are social animals, they spend a lot of time in a group of other giraffes. A group of giraffes is called a herd.

Giraffes like to go for walks together and to eat together.

When a giraffe dies, members of their giraffe herd are sometimes seen to change the way they behave, some scientists think this is because they're grieving.

Grieving giraffes have been seen to gather around the giraffe who has died, a little like a funeral or a vigil.

If you meet a grieving giraffe, you can be a good friend by:

- Writing a nice message for them to find
- Spending time eating together
- Or dancing together

And remember:
It's easier to face challenges when we work together.

Thank you for being a good friend!

How to Look After a Grieving Crow

Welcome to the grief helpline for social animals!

How to look after a grieving Crow!

Crows are social animals, they spend a lot of time in a group of other crows. A group of crows is called a horde, or a murder!

Young crows like to play by collecting toys like nut shells and stones, and many adult crows collect food, hiding it away for later.

When a crow dies, members of their crow horde are sometimes seen to change the way they behave, some scientists think this is because they're grieving.

Grieving crows have been seen to call to other crows, telling them to gather together, when they find out that a crow has died.

If you meet a grieving crow, you can be a good friend by:

- Helping them to gather together ideas to help them feel better:
- Such as having a giggle
- Drinking their favourite drink
- Or watching their favourite TV show.

And remember:
You are a very brave and kind adventurer.

Thank you for being a good friend!

Project created by:
Jenny Gaskell
jennygaskell.com

Illustrated by:
Macy Lowry Cassells Lee
and Johanna Wilson

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heartofglass

wonderarts

heartofglass.org.uk
wonderarts.co.uk

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REBUILDING LIVES TOGETHER

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CREATIVE PEOPLE AND PLACES

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