

## **Children's Grief Center of New Mexico, Fall 2020 Services Update**

The Children's Grief Center of New Mexico provides free peer support programs for young people ages 5 – 25 and their adult caregivers, who are grieving the death of a loved one.

As our COVID-19 response has led us to provide these services via Zoom, we are able to invite bereaved students and families from across the state to participate.

As school counselors, educators, administrators and key adults in students' lives across our state, we are reaching out to share this news and invite a partnership of caring for those who grieve. We rely on you to refer students and families who've experienced a death to participate in our services. **Referral is easy: just give the guardian our phone number (505-323-0478) and/or email address (info@childrensgrief.org), and they can contact us to get started.** We will conduct a brief and compassionate intake over the phone, and invite them to attend a Zoom-meeting orientation, where they can learn what we expect from them and what they can expect from these services.

After orientation is complete, students and adults will be scheduled into regular Zoom support groups, facilitated by trained and vetted Bereavement Facilitator volunteers from all walks of life.

**Safety concerns are rare, but they do occur. Grieving families are stressed, and sometimes they need extra help beyond what a remote support group can provide. In these circumstances, we will rely on you – your expertise of local resources and your connection with your students' families.**

- If issues arise in group (such as the student or adult requests referrals to individual counseling, or additional community-based services), we will reach out to the student's school counselor and ask the counselor to follow up with the family.
- If issues arise in group that are urgent, such as imminent threats of harm to self or others, our facilitators will contact a staff person who will assess the issue and either engage the NM Crisis Access Warm Line to meet with the family members, or if appropriate, call the local community's 911 services and alert them to the issue.

Peer Support Groups are NOT counseling, and the conversations are always kept confidential – with exceptions for participants' safety only. We will not contact school personnel, nor share information outside of group, unless information is shared with our volunteers that requires us to seek extra support.

We are excited and a little nervous to step into this new way of providing grief support. We welcome your wisdom and partnership as we seek to serve our grieving children and their caregivers. Thank you for the great work you do in tending to our state's students and families. Please reach out with any questions, and for more general information about the Children's Grief Center and upcoming events, visit [www.childrensgrief.org](http://www.childrensgrief.org)