

Hello Caring Team Coordinators!

I hope that you are having a wonderful start to your April! I had a few announcements that I wanted to share with you all.

Poster Contest Winners: Thank you to all of the schools who submitted posters in this year's Caring Team for Grieving Student's Poster Contest! We were overwhelmed by this year's participation, thank you! After receiving some very amazing works of art, we have our 3 winners for this year. Congratulations to our winners:

- Elementary School Winner- Owen Rose, Madison Rorabaugh, and Audrey Rorabaugh - Reserve Primary School, Shaler Area School District
- Middle School Winner- Layla Morrow and Kendra McKee - Moon Area Middle School, Moon Area School District
- High School Winner- Diana Houston - Grove City High School, Grove City Area School District

The students and their Caring Team Coordinators have all been notified of winning. Their posters will be replicated and passed onto schools as part of our Caring Team "back to school" resources this fall. We will also reveal the winning posters at next year's Caring Team for Grieving Students Annual Summit!

Save the Date!: Speaking of the Caring Team for Grieving Students Annual Summit, the Summit will take place at the Warrendale Caring Place on **Wednesday October 18th**! We are excited to invite school staff and student leaders to learn more about supporting peers that are grieving, the Highmark Caring Place and Children's Grief Awareness Day. You will also bring resources and materials back to your schools to support your grieving students throughout the school year. A formal invite will come at the beginning of next school year, but please mark your calendars!

School Services 2023-2024: Please reach out if you would like to discuss partnering with the Highmark Caring Place next school year. Caring Place staff are available to co-facilitate grief groups at your schools, provide classroom presentations, and are also available to provide professional development and training to faculty and staff. If you would like to learn more, please feel free to call or email me.

Highmark Caring Place Programming: The Highmark Caring Place is currently forming in person groups. If you know of any families that may be interested in participating, please have them contact us at 1-888-734-4073. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Thanks and have a great rest of your week!

Shawn



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Hello Caring Team Coordinators,

Did you know that the Highmark Caring Place offers peer support groups at your schools? It is one of the many ways we are partnering with local school districts in supporting grieving students.

How does it work? The *Caring Team for Grieving Students* is set up to help schools provide support to grieving children and teens within the school setting. One of the support services offered to our Caring Team partner schools are school-based peer support groups. A Caring Place staff member (typically myself) will work with you to co-facilitate a 7-9 meeting group in your school. We offer this service with schools as we know many students cannot make it to the Caring Place for support. We also know how important it is for students to see they are not alone in their grief and that there are others within their school building that understand what it is like to have someone very special to them die.

Great, let's get started! In order to make that happen, the interested school district must enter into a ***Letter of Agreement*** with the Highmark Caring Place. We highly recommend a district wide agreement as it has been our experience that once it becomes known that a group was run in one building, often other buildings want the same opportunity. The signed Letter of Agreement covers two years and is the first step in the process and is the approval we need to begin working with you on your group.

What happens after a Letter of Agreement is signed? Once the Letter of Agreement is signed, the Caring Place will work with your district to schedule and provide a school groups training. This training will consist of learning about the topic of grief and the Caring Place's philosophies on grief and our model of peer support. The training will also cover the logistics of co-facilitating the group too, i.e. how to identify students, how many students for a group is needed, finding a private space for group, required consents, what happens during those 7-9 meetings, etc. This co-facilitation model is a true partnership – although we come in as experts on grief, you are the experts of your students and your schools and you play a vital role in co-facilitating the group with us. Once the training is complete, the Caring Place will work with your district on when to schedule the groups.

How much does this service cost? Partnering with the Highmark Caring Place to co-facilitate a grief group at schools is free. As is the case with all services provided by the Highmark Caring Place, programming at our site for families and also within the community to our partners is offered at no cost.

I have worked with the Caring Place in the past, can our district work with you again?

Yes! Although we do have to prioritize school districts we haven't worked with before, co-facilitating with the Highmark Caring Place previously does not exclude your district from working with us again. We understand that competing priorities in your role of supporting students often does not make running grief groups regularly feasible, and even sometimes that opportunity does not frequently present itself if your student population doesn't have that need.

I am interested, what do I do next? If you are interested in co-facilitating a peer support group at your school or just want to learn more about working together, please just reach out to me by responding to this email or giving me a call. I would be happy to discuss any questions you might have and provide further details on the above mentioned steps. I am also available to come to your school for a meeting and to speak with any of your colleagues/teams at your district about this and our other services.

Thank you for your continued support of the Highmark Caring Place and to the grieving students in your school community!

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