

Seasons for Growth



Adult program

Seasons for Growth strengthens the emotional and mental wellbeing of adults who are adapting to experiences of change, loss and grief in their lives, such as death, separation and divorce.

The program is evidence-based and uses the imagery of the seasons to describe and understand the experience of change, loss and grief. Trained 'Companions' facilitate small groups where participants support and learn from each other in engaging activities. Participants learn that change and loss are a natural part of life and that they are not alone in dealing with the effects of these experiences. They also learn communication, decision making and problem-solving skills to support them to adapt to their new circumstances.

Who is it for?

Adults who are living with the effects of change and loss. Many factors can cause change such as:

- Impacts of natural disasters and COVID-19
- Family separation
- Loss of someone or something you love
- Relocation
- Impact of illness
- Family work-life changes
- Individuals imprisoned

Change affects everyone differently, as does grief. It's the impact of the change, not the event itself that Seasons for Growth focuses on. We suggest that anyone affected by bereavement wait 6-12 months before participating in a Seasons for Growth program.

"Grieving is like being in a fog: you can't see much, and you wonder if people can see you. Seasons for Growth helped lift the fog."

- Participant



How does it work?

Seasons for Growth is a small group program that combines psychology and education with peer support, within a person centred learning approach. It uses the metaphor of the seasons to explore the cyclic nature of grief, and is underpinned by William Worden's tasks of grieving.

The program aims to normalise participants' experiences, and can increase protective factors (including building personal resilience and social skills) while minimising some risk factors (including isolation) that influence mental health and wellbeing. It also supports the development of communication, decision making and problem solving skills.



MacKillop Family Services acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Elders in each of the communities where we work.



MacKillop celebrates and draws strength from diversity and respects the dignity of all people. We value an inclusive culture where lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, queer, gender diverse, intersex and asexual people (LGBTIQ+) have the right to be safe.

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How is it delivered?

Run over 4-8 sessions, **Exploring the Seasons of Grief** is a small group (4-7 participants) grief and loss program.

The **Understanding Change, Loss and Grief** 3 hour seminar is designed for use in a wide variety of contexts with up to 25 participants, where groups and individuals are seeking to deepen their general understanding of change, loss and grief.

Trained 'Companions' facilitate either/both elements of the Seasons for Growth adult program. Companions may be agency staff, endorsed volunteers or other suitable adults who undertake a two-day training workshop and subsequent accreditation.

Outcomes

Seasons for Growth provides the support and space for adults to:

- **Learn** how different people respond to change, loss and grief
- **Understand** that it is normal to experience a range of grief reactions
- **Explore** new approaches to dealing with change, loss and grief in their lives
- **Build** communication, decision making and problem solving skills
- **Participate** in a supportive network of peers and adults
- **Integrate** their new learning into their relationships with family, friends and others.



Evidence and evaluation

Seasons for Growth has been evaluation on a number of occasions with the following conclusions:

The University of Melbourne, 2005

"Reduces participants' isolation and develops their concern for other people."

Department of Health and Ageing, 2008

"The content and structure of the program is professional, well designed and well executed to deliver fundamental and positive change."

University of Central Queensland, 2008

"The systematic progression through the program was therapeutic ... individuals felt more in control of their own lives and their responses to situations, thus building resilience."

Mental Health Association NSW, 2010

"Participants achieved increased knowledge, skills and understanding about change, loss and grief and tools to help manage both current and past issues."




"Seasons for Growth challenged me with aspects of forgiveness and letting go ..."

- Participant

Get in touch

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