

## **KIDS CAN COPE PROGRAM**

### **PARENTS' GUIDE**

Kids Can Cope is a program sponsored by South Central Cancer Resource in collaboration with the Department of Psychosocial Oncology, CancerCare Manitoba. It is information and support group for children aged 5 to 18 who have a parent or close family member living with cancer.

The following is a brief outline of the types of activities and issues that will be covered each week. However, as in all support groups, the facilitators will often diverge from the agenda in order to deal with the issues and concerns that arise with the particular group of children they are facilitating.

Each week we meet as a large group initially and offer the children a snack—because all children are hungry immediately after school. After a brief period of eating and visiting, we break into similar age groups, if possible. Each group is co-facilitated by a psychosocial clinician (social worker, community mental health worker) and a nurse. At least one of persons has experience with Oncology.

#### **SESSION ONE: Getting to know each other**

##### **Purpose:**

1. To provide the kids with an opportunity to begin to become acquainted with one another and the facilitators.
2. To build trust with each other and the facilitators.
3. To provide them with the opportunity to begin to talk about whom in their family has cancer, kinds of treatment, etc.
4. To review group agreements which include:
  - You don't have to talk if you don't want to.
  - Only one person can talk at a time.
  - What we say in the group stays in the group (confidentiality).
  - No put down of one another is allowed.

#### **SESSION TWO: Understanding Cancer and Cancer treatments**

##### **Purpose:**

1. To provide some basic teaching about cancer and treatment.
2. To dispel myths and misconceptions about cancer and treatment.
3. To provide kids with a chance to familiarize themselves with both the chemotherapy treatment area and the technology used, through a hands-on tour of the area in BTHC. Radiotherapy will also be discussed.

## **SESSION THREE: Feelings**

### **Purpose:**

1. To explore some of the feelings the kids have about the experience of having a loved one with cancer.
2. To provide an opportunity for the kids to learn that their feelings are normal and shared by their peers.

## **SESSION FOUR: Coping**

### **Purpose:**

1. To explore a variety of coping skills and strategies with the kids to help them deal with the emotional impact of cancer.
2. To provide the kids with a sense of competence at being able to cope.

## **SESSION FIVE: Changes in the family**

### **Purpose:**

1. To help the kids see change as a natural part of life.
2. To give them a chance to share some of the changes and losses that have occurred in their families as a result of the illness.
3. To provide an opportunity to again recognize that others share their feelings and experiences.
4. To revisit any other topics that are important to discuss at this point.

## **SESSION SIX: Wrap-up**

### **Purpose:**

1. To acknowledge the end of the group.
2. To provide group members with the opportunity to say good-bye to one another.
3. To mark the event with the ever-popular pizza party.
4. To take time to hear from the kids on their group experience.

## **PARENTS' NIGHT:**

### **Purpose:** To provide an opportunity for parents/care-givers:

1. To hear about some of the issues and activities covered in the program.
2. To receive non-child specific feedback from the facilitators about the activities and issues raised during the program.
3. To provide feedback about their perceptions of the program.
4. To connect with others in similar circumstances.