



Meeting the needs of bereaved young men in custody

Nina Vaswani, Research Fellow, CYCJ

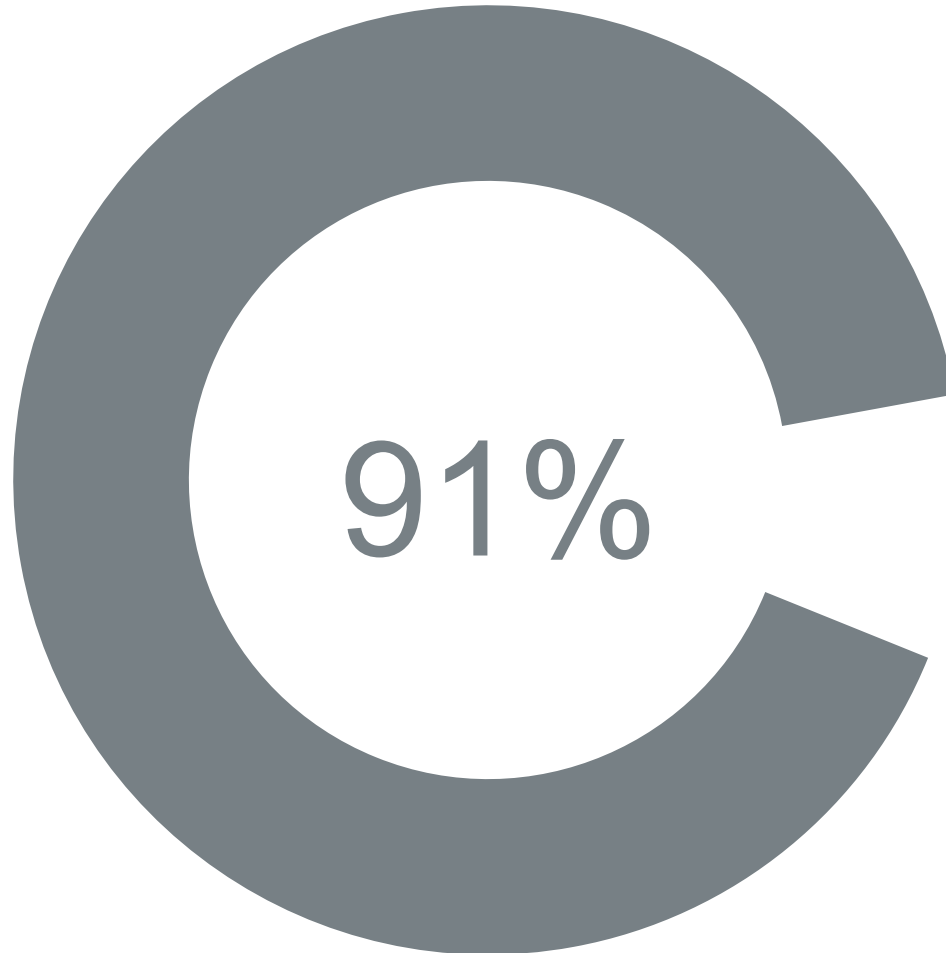
Donald Scott, Chaplain, HM YOI Polmont

Nicola Robertson, Depute Principal Educational
Psychologist, Falkirk

Why do we need Seasons for Growth in HM YOI Polmont?

- 2012 bereavement study
- Sample of 33 young men
- Survey, mental health screen, in-depth interviews
- What did we find?

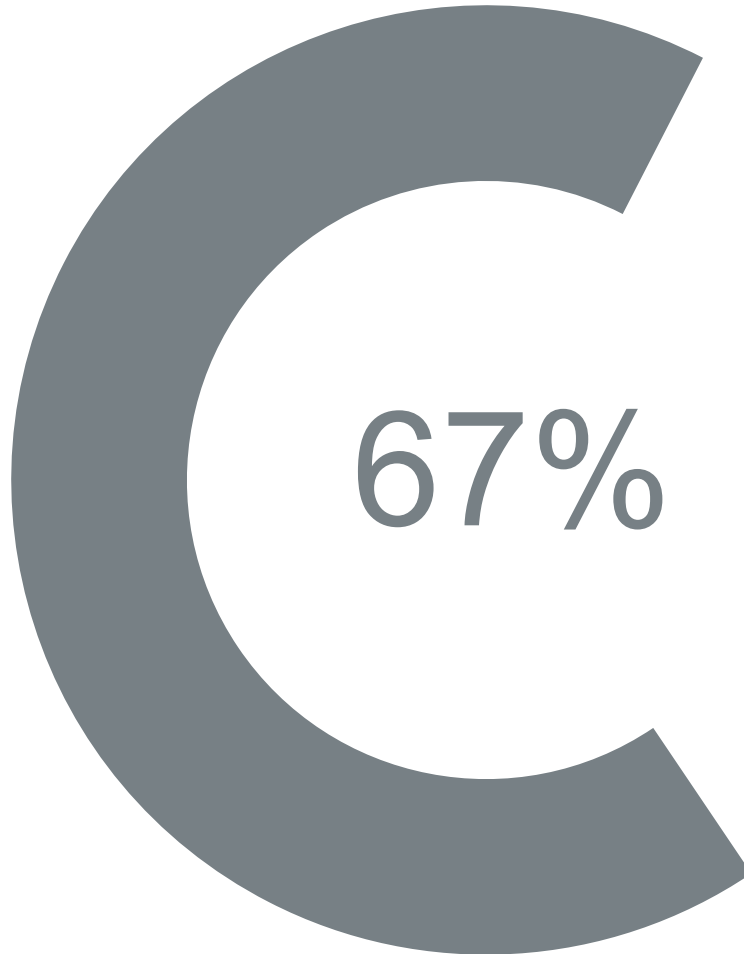
Prevalence and Nature



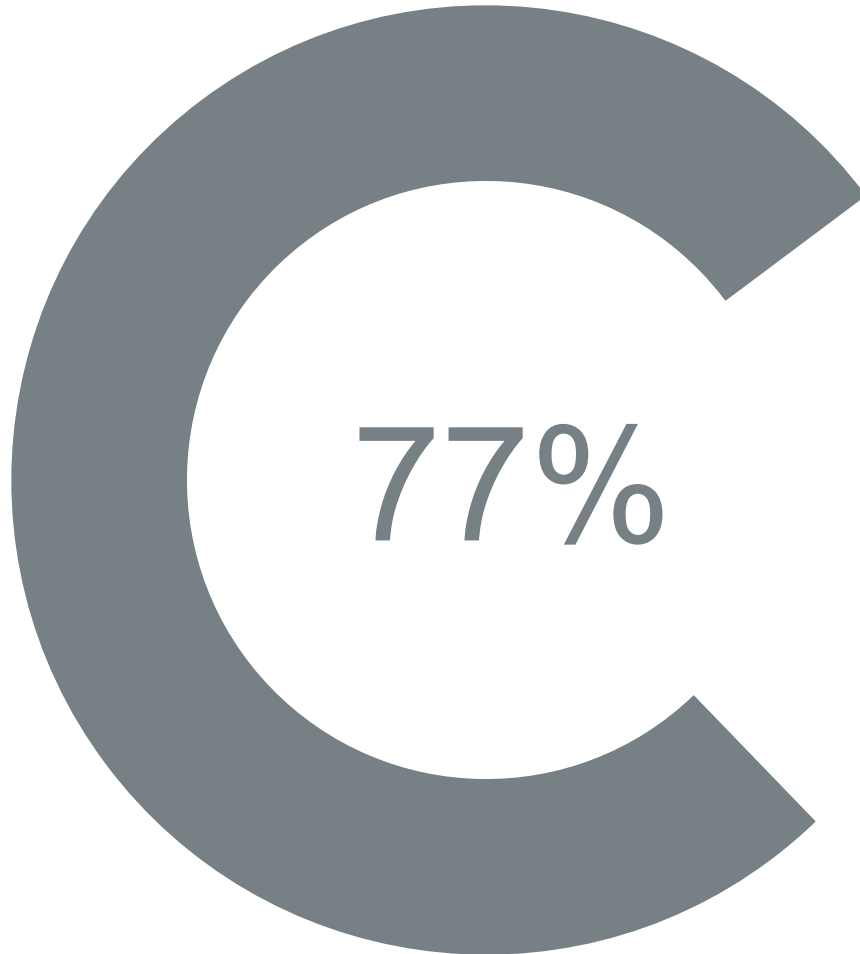
Prevalence and Nature



Prevalence and Nature



Prevalence and Nature



young men's words

“

I was thinking about like ‘how many more people do I have to see die? Am I gonnae grow up and see everybody die off?’ know what I mean? That was the way I kinda felt, I’m only 19 and that’s five people died already and I keep thinking to myself ‘are the rest of them gonna die?’ know what I mean then I’ll grow up alone.

”

The pain of grief

- sadness, shock, anger, numbness
- high rates of traumatic and multiple death
 - complicated grief
 - increased risk of depression
 - self esteem
 - risk-taking behaviour
- young men often attributed a bereavement to:
 - increase in substance misuse
 - behavioural issues
 - entry to prison

young men's words

“

I just didnae bother with anything, even the police they didn't scare me, they didn't bother me anymore

”

“

I'd no been in prison before but after my Gran died everything got worse just from there, I just started drinking a lot more and I drink every day now basically

”

Coping strategies

- macho culture and stoicism
 - male role models
- remembering or forgetting
 - avoidant / non avoidant
 - complicated / unresolved grief
 - tendency to act out frustrations
 - implications for behaviour management / reintegration
- help-seeking is difficult
 - emotional and mental health literacy
 - social support

A catalogue of losses

- Not just about bereavement:
 - Loss of relationships and connections
 - Loss of status
 - Loss of security
 - Loss of opportunities and future

What can we conclude?

- A group of bereaved young men
- Traumatic and multiple bereavements
- Compounded by other losses
- A challenging environment in which to be vulnerable
- Young men with poor coping strategies
 - Unresolved grief
 - Pain and distress for the young men
 - Acting out and challenging behaviour
- No easy challenge.....

Implementing Seasons for Growth

- Adult Programme Seminars
- Ran a Group

Seminar Evaluations

- Chaplains, Prison Officers, Forensic Psychologist, Social Workers (11 people)
 - The aim of this seminar was to increase your understanding of change, loss and grief.
 - Overall did the seminar achieve this aim?
 - On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is 'Did not achieve this aim' and 5 is 'Achieved this aim'.

100% of respondents chose 4 or 5

What aspects of the seminar did you find most helpful?

- All
- Discussion/sharing experiences and exploring how Seasons for Growth might work within Polmont (4)
- Journal helpful (2)
- Storm Warning activity helpful (3)
- How Grief affects self and others (3)
- Coping strategies and personalities

What aspects of the seminar did you find least helpful?

- 8 felt it was all helpful
- 1 found Network of support exercise confusing
- 2 would like more depth and specifics how to support an individual

What feedback would you like to give the Companion (Facilitator)?

- Positive comments about delivery
- Advice before starting a group (3)
- Worthwhile, long overdue in Polmont

Reflections

- Grief and loss
- Spiritual dimensions of grief
- Social dimensions
- Overcoming restrictions of context
- Recommendations:
 - Training
 - Policy Development
 - Look at barriers and plan to overcome them

Running a Group

- Planning/Prework/Organisation
- Managing a group
- Safe place
- Reflections

Young People's Comments

Most Helpful?

- Understanding of changes and the appropriate actions taken to change things
- Expressing myself – ie feeling ege!
- Summer

Young People's Comments

Least Helpful?

- The group of people
- Winter

Young People's Comments

What will you take from your experience of Seasons for Growth and continue to think about or work on?

- Dealing with loss and grief
- Yes defo
- Weigh up options in life and take time to change

Young People's Comments

What feedback would you like to give the companions?

- I enjoyed the program
- This is a good experience. I would like to do more?
- Can give people help and comfort

Companion Reflections

- Sharing/discussion
- Tiring
- Accents
- Change Pace/monitor engagement
- Balance – Management/acceptance
- Happy Memories

Next steps for the research

- Collaborating to evaluate the effectiveness of Seasons for Growth
- Potentially four groups – 2 under 18, 2 over 18
- Method
 - Grief and well-being measures at T1, T2, and T3:
 - Young men's experiences
 - Companions' experiences
- Complete by autumn 2015

A wee peek at early findings...

- Caution! – only 4 young men in research so far, self report, and a snapshot in time
 - Complicated grief scores
 - Self-Concept
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
 - Anger
 - Disruptive Behaviour

