

WHEN DREAMS CHANGE



Course Guide

WHEN DREAMS CHANGE

When Dreams Change aims to enable parents and carers to reflect on their experience of having a child or young person with additional needs, and to become more of the person they have been created to be.

Additional needs are...

wide ranging and could include a physical disability, cognitive disability, mental health problem or undiagnosed need that impacts on participation in everyday activities.



15.5%
of children in
the UK have
additional
needs.¹

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WDC Attendee FEEDBACK

'I think one of the most important things of going on the When Dreams Change course for me was just acknowledging that I'm a person who can have dreams. It dared me to dream about things not just for my child who has additional needs but for myself as well.'

WHEN DREAMS CHANGE

As a charity Growing Hope aims to grow hope for children, hope for families and hope in Jesus across the UK. When Dreams Change was designed by Growing Hope's CEO and children's occupational therapist Dr Naomi Graham and counsellor Heather Graham. It uses counselling and therapeutic techniques to enable all parents (regardless of their background or beliefs) to be able to process their experience of having a child with additional needs. 15.5% of children in the UK's education system¹ have additional needs which impact on their ability to participate in everyday activities. This means that several individuals in our local communities are experiencing the impact of additional needs on their family.

When Dreams Change aims to give parents and carers the opportunity to experience hope in their situations. During the course we hope that parents will be able to reflect on their own experience and the emotions they are experiencing, identify where their support network is and reflect on their own hopes and dreams for the future.

WDC Facilitator FEEDBACK

"I am co-leading When Dreams Change this term and it has been amazing meeting and working alongside parents of children with a variety of additional needs. They have been working through the grief cycle, learning how to understand themselves better, and are now looking forward to their own personal dreams. It is and continues to be such a privilege to help parent's unlock their true potential, not just their kids!"

Parents of children with additional needs suffer from increased levels of stress, depression and anxiety.²



SUMMARY

WHEN DREAMS CHANGE

The course is designed to run as four 1 1/2 hour sessions. The course uses videos produced by Growing Hope, handouts, interactive activities and group discussions to consider different challenges parents and carers might be facing.

Anyone is able to complete the course, regardless of their background and beliefs. The When Dreams Change course has a Christian underpinning and sessions follow the story of Joseph using passages from the Bible to help discuss different experiences parents may be having. The course can be run across church, community and school settings.

'I found all the sessions helpful, but especially the mask session as I didn't realise how much of myself I was hiding.'

- WDC Attendee

WDC Session Aims

1

To help parents feel relaxed, safe and to enable them to engage with the feelings that they may have suppressed about the journey they have been on personally since their child was born or since his or her needs became apparent.

2

To enable parents to focus on themselves, how they see themselves and how they project themselves to others. By the end of this session they will hopefully have a better understanding of themselves and will be starting to consider their own emotional needs.

3

To look at practicalities of the challenges that parents face daily, such as stress and challenging relationships, to give them some tools to tackle these and also to help them to recognise the support network they do have.

4

To help parents to recognise the gifts and skills they have, things they have used in the past and new skills and to start to dream about things they might do in the future. Finally, to think about small steps they might take now to help them move towards that by looking at ways they can balance their time to include themselves.

WHEN DREAMS CHANGE

As a charity, we measure the outcome of the groups that we run in order that we can show the impact they are having to grant providers and future attendees. We use the Goal Attainment Scale (GAS)³ to measure the success of the When Dreams Change course. GAS is commonly used within research to measure the effectiveness of therapeutic activities. GAS goals are seen to be an appropriate and sensitive outcome measure which allow healthcare professional to measure the effectiveness of their services.

Three goals are set at the beginning of the When Dreams Change course and facilitators record whether parents and carers have achieved these goals at the end of the course.

WDC Goals

1

For parents/carers to reflect on their own experience and map out and share with the group the core emotions they are experiencing at the moment.

2

By the end of the course, for parents/carers to be able to reflect on their support network and share with the group one way in which they can draw on this.

3

By the end of the course, for a parent to verbalise their own dreams and share with the group one small step they will make towards their dreams.

100%
of goals were
achieved in
2020 by WDC
attendees.



GOALS

WHEN DREAMS CHANGE

As well as recording the GAS goals achieved by parents attending the WDC course, we also ask them to complete a feedback form.

The feedback we have received shows a significant improvement in the mental health and wellbeing of parents attending the course. We also use the feedback forms to adapt the course to better support parents with the challenges they are facing.

'I really enjoyed all the sessions, but I especially enjoyed the mask activity. The format was brilliant: it started emotionally heavy with the talk of loss, and transitioned nicely into talking about positivity and coping. Overall I was comfortable to share my feelings with other attendees. These sessions have helped me to visually see where I now stand, and what I need to work on.'

'I found it helpful speaking about my emotions and dreams, and understanding it is OK to feel a certain way.'

'This parent who is sitting next to me they're feeling the same things that I'm feeling, that really made me feel part of a group.'



FEEDBACK

WHEN DREAMS CHANGE

Head to www.growinghope.org.uk/wdcreferrals to book yourself or a parent/carer you know onto a local in-person or online course. We can also run courses for schools, churches and other organisations.

If you are interested in becoming a When Dreams Change Facilitator and running the course in your local community then head to www.growinghope.org.uk/training for more information and to sign up.

If you have any questions then please get in touch by emailing: info@growinghope.org.uk

WDC Attendee FEEDBACK

'Throughout the course we were able to express our feelings and believe me, some of them are quite ugly and embarrassing...I am still in touch with the other Mums who attended the course with me. It is very helpful because having a special needs child can be a gift but some days it can be a burden. If you suppress the ugly feelings then you will never be able to heal. The course leader held such a safe space for us to offload our frustrations that I am sure we all started to heal there..'

The WDC course is free for parents and carers.



SIGN UP

WHEN DREAMS CHANGE GROWING HOPE

When Dreams Change has been designed by and is administered by Growing Hope.

growinghope.org.uk

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References

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