



Making Every Day Count

# Bereavement Support

Coping with Bereavement and Grief



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## Living with bereavement and grief

The death of someone close can be devastating. There is no right or wrong way to grieve and your experience of grief will be different from other people's. Reactions may be influenced by a number of things including previous experiences of bereavement, age and personality, religious and spiritual beliefs, cultural background, life circumstances and how you cope with loss.

The following information aims to help you understand some of the emotions which you may face during your bereavement and to make some practical suggestions to help you through this difficult time.

At the back of this booklet there are some addresses and telephone numbers of organisations which may be helpful.



# Understanding Grief

Every person's experience of grief is different but when someone close dies you may initially feel shocked, numb, angry, guilty and scared.

These feelings can change to feelings of sadness, pining, loneliness – thinking about how you will cope in the future may frighten you.

These are some of the common feelings that many people share and over time you may find that these feelings lessen. Whilst every person's experience of grief is unique there are some common reactions to bereavement.

## **Is it normal to have physical reactions to my loss**

Physical reactions to a death are very common. You may find you don't want to eat, you feel exhausted and frequently people find that they are unable to sleep. Poor sleep patterns can leave you unable to think clearly and feeling drained. Other physical symptoms can include feeling empty inside, headaches, stomach aches and generally feeling run down. Whilst these reactions should pass in time, if they persist you may want to consult your GP.

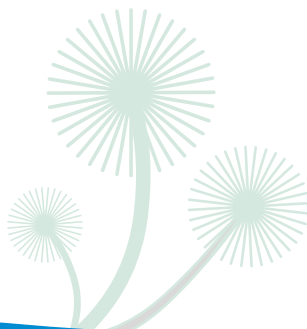
## **Am I going mad? I keep on hearing their voice**

You may have what you feel are some odd experiences. It is not unusual to see or hear the person who has died. Many people talk to the person as if they were still there. This can happen when you are not expecting it, almost as if your mind has 'forgotten' for a moment that they have died.

## **Why can't I stop going over and over every detail of their last few days**

It is a common reaction to keep on repeatedly thinking about what happened, particularly if the death was sudden or occurred in traumatic circumstances. It seems to be the mind's way of processing what has happened and this tends to reduce over time.

Talking with the health care professionals involved may help – see the contact details on the back page.



### **I feel like there's no point in going on**

It is not unusual for people coping with bereavement to think about their own death and ending their own life as a way out of the pain. It is really important to share these thoughts with people you can trust. It is very common to feel hopeless and despairing after the death of someone close but if these feelings continue and you feel overwhelmed, please go to page 9 - 'When to seek further help'

### **I just feel so guilty**

A lot of people wonder whether they could have done anything differently which might have helped or prevented the death; they may feel guilt at somehow having let the person down, or think constantly 'if only I had ...?'

It is also common to feel relief at someone's death following a long and painful illness and then to feel guilty for feeling like this. It can be extremely painful to live with these emotions. If you can, try and focus on the good times and avoid focusing on events in the past which you cannot change.

If you find you cannot move past these feelings of guilt, you may choose to seek support to talk about them further (see the support organisations section starting on page 11).

### **Why do I feel so angry?**

Unfortunately, the death of someone close can bring changes in terms of financial and family responsibilities that you may feel you can't cope with. You may feel really angry that you are being left on your own to handle all these things. Or perhaps you feel angry with someone you consider to be responsible for the death. Anger is a normal part of grief. It is a reaction to feeling out of control. If you do have any questions about the final illness of your loved one, then it may well be helpful to make contact with the doctors or nurses who looked after them – see the contact details on the back of this booklet

### **Why have people stopped caring? They don't come around anymore or ring me like they used to**

Sometimes people avoid the bereaved person because they don't know what to say or are scared of upsetting you. People do not always realise how long it takes to recover from a death and expect you to be feeling better very quickly. You may need to tell friends and family that it helps to talk about the person who has died.



# Understanding Grief

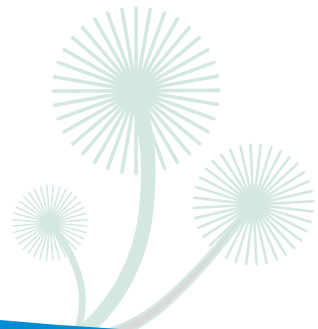
## **I can't concentrate and I am worried about how I will cope at work**

People find it hard to concentrate after a death. It may be difficult to read a book or watch television. It is quite normal to feel like this and to forget where things are or what you are meant to be doing. However, this can be worrying and can cause problems at work. It is a good idea to talk to your manager to explain this. It may even be worthwhile exploring whether there is a possibility of altering your working hours or other ways of working to help you through this difficult period.

## **When am I going to start to feel better?**

It takes time to heal from grief and each of us responds differently. Coming to terms with a death is a very gradual process which can take a long time. In the initial days after a bereavement, family and friends often pull together and support you but frequently the reality of the death takes time to sink in and it is often when family and friends think you should be 'getting better' and pull back a little that you feel at your most lonely and sad.

Over time people usually find that they are able to get on with their lives whilst continuing to remember their loved ones. Generally, people start to feel like this within one or two years of the death. If you are beginning to start rebuilding your life try not to feel guilty. It is normal to begin to recover and to start to rebuild your life – it does not in any way mean you are being disloyal to the person who has died.



## Taking Care of Yourself - Do's and Don'ts

**It is generally agreed that the following may be helpful at this difficult time:**

**Do** express your emotions.

**Do** remember that you need time to rest, think and sleep.

**Do** be gentle with yourself. If you have a bad day, put it behind you and have another go.

**Don't** stifle your feelings.

**Don't** avoid talking about what has happened.



# Supporting Children and Young People

Adults try to protect children, often afraid they will make the situation worse for the children, believing they are too young to understand. Adults also try to shield children, believing that not talking will protect them from feelings of sadness and pain. However, this can leave children feeling excluded, afraid and alone, unable to ask questions relating to illness and death. Like adults, children will feel a range of emotions such as sadness, anger, confusion, fear, loneliness, guilt and disbelief.

Behaviours you might see in a child who is bereaved:

- Children may become clingy. They may show distress at separation from family members.
- Children may worry about their health and that of those around them.
- Children may have difficulties concentrating and become distracted.
- Children can become the compliant child or naughty child.
- They might have difficulties eating or sleeping.

Dealing with these behaviours can seem overwhelming and you may feel you need support.

## What children need:

- An opportunity to make sense of what has happened, and tell their own story.
- Clear, age-appropriate information about what has happened, and what is happening now, and to be included.
- Reassurance about their own health and that of those around them.
- Reassurance that it is not their fault.
- Adults who will answer questions and share their feelings.
- An opportunity to remember the person who has died.
- An opportunity to attend the funeral, and contribute to the way the service is run.
- Further information on children and funerals can be found at [www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)

Talking reduces both isolation and anxiety. It enables children to understand their own experience of bereavement and that of others. It fosters an ability to cope, and empowers them with a more positive outlook.



# When to Seek Further Help

The following is a list of symptoms and feelings often associated with grief. Whilst these can be a normal part of grieving, if they persist and make it difficult to manage day-to-day tasks you may wish to seek professional help if you:

- Are always feeling exhausted, anxious, suicidal, depressed, helpless, experiencing uncontrollable anger, sleeplessness or feeling stressed.
- Are becoming withdrawn and unable to speak or spend time with family and friends, or are finding it difficult to cope at work, school etc.
- Are becoming dependent on drugs or alcohol.
- Have little desire to get involved in activities you once enjoyed.

Your family doctor may be able to help particularly if you are worried about your own health.

You can also contact the Counselling and Emotional Care Services Team (CAEC) at St. Rocco's Hospice to discuss whether there may be other avenues of support that you could explore to help you through this difficult time.

Remember, this may be in the first few weeks, many months or years after someone has died.



# Useful Resources

What to do after someone dies.

Scan here  
to learn  
more



Reading for adults on bereavement see the following website or ask your local library.



Scan here  
to learn  
more



Reading for children and young adults on bereavement see the website below. If you do not have access to the internet, your local library will be able to help you.

Scan here  
to learn  
more



# Bereavement Cafes

## St. Rocco's Hospice Counselling and Emotional Care Team

Lockton Lane, Bewsey, Warrington  
WA5 0BW  
01925 575 780

## St. Rocco's Bereavement Cafe Stockton Heath

Alexandra Park Pavilion, Stockton Heath  
WA4 2UT  
Second Tuesday of every month  
9.30am-11.00am

## St. Rocco's Bereavement Cafe Bank Pavillion

Bank Park Pavillion, Warrington  
WA1 1UH  
Last Tuesday of the month  
10.00am-11.30am

The St. Rocco's Community Bereavement Cafes are open to all who are grieving and suffering after the loss of a loved one. The St. Rocco's Counselling and Emotional Care Team with volunteers are there to listen.

You can choose to talk one to one with a volunteer or talk to others with a similar bereavement in an informal and safe environment.

The cafes are free and open for anyone to 'Drop-In', a referral or pre-booking is not needed. There is wheelchair access available.  
Email: [enquiries@stroccos.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@stroccos.org.uk)  
Tel: 0333 366 1066

Scan to find out more



# Support Organisations

## **Citizens Advice Bureau – Warrington**

The Gateway, 89 Sankey Street  
Warrington, Cheshire  
WA1 1SR  
Tel: 01925 246 994

The Citizens Advice Service helps people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free, independent and confidential advice

## **Warrington Bereavement Support**

Tel: 01925 631 516  
[www.wbsupport.org.uk](http://www.wbsupport.org.uk)

## **Macmillan Direct Volunteering Service**

Tel: 07455 758 717  
Email: [northwestdvs@macmillan.org.uk](mailto:northwestdvs@macmillan.org.uk)

Service offering practical and emotional support to anybody in Warrington and the surrounding area adjusting to the loss of a loved one, regardless of place or cause of death

## **The Samaritans – Warrington**

Bank Quay House, Sankey Street  
Warrington, Cheshire  
WA1 1NN  
Tel: 01925 235 000  
[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

24-hour telephone emotional and practical support, and face-to-face befriending during the day at local branches

## **Widows and Widowers of Cheshire**

[www.meetup.com/Widows-and-Widowers-of-Cheshire/](http://www.meetup.com/Widows-and-Widowers-of-Cheshire/)

Chester based group for people who have lost a partner. No restriction on membership location – if you are willing to travel you are welcome. Not a support group or bereavement group as such, and definitely not a dating site, just a group of people getting on with life and having a lot of fun and laughter together



## Family and Child Bereavement

### Elsie Ever After

Twitter: [twitter.com/ElsieEverAfter](https://twitter.com/ElsieEverAfter)  
[www.facebook.com/ElsieEverAfter](https://www.facebook.com/ElsieEverAfter)  
Email: [elsieeverafter@hotmail.com](mailto:elsieeverafter@hotmail.com)  
Cheshire based organisation supporting bereaved families

## General national organisations that may be able to offer help

### Age UK

Tel: 0800 055 6112  
[www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)  
Provides information and advice to people over 50 on a variety of topics

### Bereavement Advice Centre

[www.bereavementadvice.org](http://www.bereavementadvice.org)  
Tel: 0800 634 9494  
Offers practical information and advice on the issues and procedures facing us after a death

### Cruse Bereavement Care

[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)  
Tel: 0808 808 1677  
Offers counselling, support and advice. A newsletter and extensive list of books and leaflets are published

### The Good Grief Trust

[www.thegoodgrieftrust.org](http://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org)  
Provides vital resources for people experiencing bereavement and offers comfort and practical support.

## Lesbian and Gay support from London Friend

[www.londonfriend.org.uk](http://www.londonfriend.org.uk)  
Tel: 0207 833 1674  
Charity offering advice and emotional support to people bereaved by the death of a same sex partner

### NHS Live Well

[www.nhs.uk/Livewell/bereavement/pages/copingwithbereavement.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/bereavement/pages/copingwithbereavement.aspx)  
NHS page with information on bereavement

### Tenovus Cancer Care

Tel: 0808 808 1010  
[www.tenovuscancercare.org.uk](http://www.tenovuscancercare.org.uk)  
Charity offering telephone support or online support

### Terrence Higgins Trust

Tel: 0808 802 1221 (Monday-Friday, 10am - 8pm)  
[www.tht.org.uk](http://www.tht.org.uk)  
Practical and emotional support for anyone who has lost someone to HIV/AIDS

### Widowed and Young

[www.widowedandyoung.org.uk](http://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk)  
WAY is a peer-to-peer support group for men and women aged 50 or under when their partner died



## **Family and Child Bereavement national organisations that may be able to offer help**

### **Care for the Family**

Tel: 029 2081 0800

[www.careforthefamily.org.uk/family-life/bereavement-support](http://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/family-life/bereavement-support)

Organisation promoting family life, offers bereavement support to those widowed young and those bereaved of a child, as well as support and advice for those who are currently supporting a bereaved person

### **Child Bereavement UK**

Tel: 0800 028 8840 (free from landlines)

[www.childbereavementuk.org](http://www.childbereavementuk.org)

Offering support to those who have been bereaved of a child, or to children facing bereavement. Local office in Runcorn

### **Child Death Helpline**

Tel: 0800 282 986

Helpline for anyone affected by the death of a child, in any circumstances no matter how recently

### **Childhood Bereavement Network**

[www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/)

Online directory of open access services for bereaved children

### **Childline**

Tel: 0800 1111

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Confidential help and support for children and young people

### **Hope Again**

Tel: 0808 808 1677 freephone helpline

<http://hopeagain.org.uk/>

Cruse's website for children and young people

### **The Compassionate Friends**

Tel: 0345 123 2304

[www.tcf.org.uk](http://www.tcf.org.uk)

Organisation of bereaved parents offering support and understanding after the death of a child of any age

### **Winston's Wish**

Tel: 08088 020 021

[www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)

Practical support and guidance for families and anyone concerned about a grieving child



## Further Support

We hope this booklet has helped you understand some of the ways losing a loved one can impact on you practically, emotionally and physically.

If you feel you are struggling, or you are worried about a friend or relative, you may wish to contact your GP or one of the organisations in this booklet.

Alternatively if you would like to find out more about the **St. Rocco's Counselling and Emotional Care** service contact us on **Tel: 0333 366 1066.**





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**St. Rocco's Hospice  
Lockton Lane, Bewsey  
Warrington WA5 0BW**

**[www.stroccos.org.uk](http://www.stroccos.org.uk)**



Care Quality Commission  
Northwest Citygate, Gallowgate  
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4PA  
Email: [enquiries@cqc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cqc.org.uk)

**Getting in Touch**

Chief Executive Officer  
St. Rocco's Hospice  
Email: [enquiries@stroccos.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@stroccos.org.uk)  
Healthcare Ombudsman  
[www.ombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk/make-a-complaint)  
Tel: **0344 015 4033**

Data Protection - The sharing of sensitive, personal information is strictly controlled by law (Data Protection Act 2018) which the Hospice complies with. This may include providing patient data to the Care Quality Commission if required to do so.

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