

when someone dies

Coping with bereavement



Cancer charity
force

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Most people will experience bereavement at some time during their life and everyone will react to their loss in their own unique way.

Grief can be very painful and may give rise to feelings and thoughts that you don't expect. You may find information in this leaflet helpful.

GRIEVING FOR SOMEONE CLOSE

The death of someone close can sometimes seem like the most painful thing that has ever happened to you. It can feel bewildering and frightening.

Grief is a natural reaction to loss and there is no right or wrong way to grieve.

Most people will experience similar feelings. These may include: initial shock and disbelief, perhaps numbness, periods of intense pain and questioning. There may be anger, regrets and times when you may feel very alone and overwhelmed. There may also be days when you feel more in control and able to get on with the day to day activities.

Grieving is not usually a smooth process as it takes time to adjust gradually to life without the person who has died.

FEELINGS, THOUGHTS AND EXPERIENCES

Even if you know someone is going to die, it is still a shock when it actually happens and you may have trouble believing they won't be coming back.

You might dream about them or even think you see the person again. It may take time for you to make an emotional adjustment to the knowledge that they have died.

Grief can bring up powerful and unexpected feelings and thoughts and you may feel overwhelmed at times.

Sometimes people feel they are 'getting worse' with time. This is quite common and may happen as the full impact of the loss sinks in and the initial 'busyness' subsides.

It is not unusual to feel angry – angry with the person who has died, anger at the loneliness you feel or anger at God or the world. Feelings of guilt and regret are common too. These feelings usually lessen with time. This is a usual part of the grieving process.

You may find it difficult to concentrate and your thoughts may be confused. Grief can be very tiring so it is important that you are gentle with yourself and don't expect to be as organised as you usually are.

You may be tempted to make big changes in your life. Most people find that this is not the best time to do so – what seems right now may not feel right in a few months' time.

It is not unusual to experience mood swings and your sleep pattern and appetite may be affected.

If you are worried about your health you may wish to talk things through with your GP.

MOVING ON

When you lose someone you love, life cannot be the same again; it has changed irrevocably.

Things may even feel so bad that you can't see any prospect of them getting better. Grieving takes time – time to adjust to a different life without that person and time to learn to lead a different life.

Although you won't forget the person you loved, with time you can find a way of holding onto your memories of them while finding hope in a future without them.

CHILDREN GRIEVE TOO

Children have thoughts and feelings which they may express in different ways. They may want to draw pictures or to tell stories. It is not possible to protect children from feeling sad, angry and hurt but by talking to them and including them in what is going on, they can be helped to understand what has happened.



WHAT CAN I DO TO HELP MYSELF?

Take time to feel the loss – build some quiet time to do so.

Talk – about what has happened, about the person who has died, about how you are feeling.

Allow yourself time – to sleep, rest, think, write or ‘do nothing’.

Take care of yourself – attempting to rest and eat well.

Find healthy ways to relieve stress – for example through activity, exercise, relaxation or prayer.

Let other people help – if that help is going to be a support to you.

Choose – the company of people who care, who let you be how you need to be and let you cry if you need to cry.

Share your grief – allow other family members and friends, including children, to share your grief and theirs.

Help children to express their grief – books, games and drawings might help; tell children’s teachers what has happened.

This may be a time of major change and re-evaluation – allow yourself time to explore these, perhaps with the help of someone you trust.

Take special care over life-changing decisions – such as moving house, legal or financial concerns.



HELPFUL BOOKS

There are many helpful books on bereavement and as we are all different, some will be of more help to us than others. The Bereavement Support Team from **Care for the Family** has read all the books on this list and all of them may contain something that will help. If you would like a copy of FORCE's Understanding and Managing Grief booklet, please go to our website: forcecancercharity.co.uk/supporting-you/bereavement/

We cannot recommend a specific book to you because we are not aware of your particular circumstances and much will depend on whether you are coming from a faith perspective.

We have categorised the books as follows:

- For bereaved parents
- For those widowed young
- On general bereavement
- For families (either to help adults with their grieving children or for adults to read with their children)

All the books are available through bookshops and on the internet and we suggest you check information and reviews before deciding whether a particular book may be helpful for you. Those books that approach bereavement from a Christian perspective are indicated with (C).

Books for bereaved parents

Lament for a Son (C), Nicholas Wolterstorff, ISBN 978-0802802941

The Shaming of the Strong (C), Sarah Williams, ISBN 978-1573834070

Always With You, Gloria Hunniford, ISBN 978-0340953976

The Worst Loss, Barbara D. Rosof, ISBN 978-0805032413

The Bereaved Parent, Harriet Sarnoff Schiff, ISBN 978-0285648913

Books for those widowed young

A Grief Observed (C), C. S. Lewis, ISBN 978-0571066247

Death and How to Survive It, Kate Boydell, ISBN 978-0091902575

Living With Loss, Liz McNeill Taylor, ISBN 978-1841191058

Widow's Journey, Xenia Rose, ISBN 978-0285650985

Surviving Your Partner, Sylvia Murphy, ISBN 978-0955051203

Mum's List, St John Greene, ISBN 0718158334

General bereavement books

A Grace Disguised (C), Jerry Sittser, ISBN 978-0310258957

Living With Bereavement (C), Sue Mayfield ISBN 978-0745952956

Tracing the Rainbow (C), Pablo Martinez and Ali Hull,
ISBN 978-1850784876

Finding Your Way After the Suicide of Someone You Love (C),
David Biebel and Suzanne Foster, ISBN 978-031025757-8

Inside Grief (C), Kathy O'Brien, ISBN 978-1860244636

A Special Scar (Suicide), Alison Wertheimer, ISBN 978-0415220279

Books to help families

Keeping Your Kids Afloat When it Feels Like You're Sinking (C),
Cyndi Lamb Curry, ISBN 978-0830734535

Children and Bereavement (C), Wendy Duffy, ISBN 978-0715149980

A Parent's Guide to Raising Grieving Children, Phyllis Silverman and
Madelyn Kelly, ISBN 978-0195328844

Straight Talk About Death for Teenagers, Earl A Grollman,
ISBN 978-0807025017

Someone Has Died Suddenly, Mary Williams, ISBN 978-1906409104

Grief Encounter Workbook, Shelley Gilbert, ISBN 978-0954843403

Muddles Puddles and Sunshine, Diana Crossley, ISBN 978-1869890582

Beyond the Rough Rock, Stubbs-Stokes/Baker, ISBN 978-0953912377

Lucy's Rainbow – A Journey of Hope (C), Judy Hopkins,
ISBN 978-1-85078-954-3



RESOURCES FOR BEREAVEMENT

CRUSE

devon@cruse.org.uk Tel: **0300 330 5466** 3 Palace Gate, Exeter EX1 1JA

NHS choices

www.nhs.uk/livewell/berereavement

Stepping Stones

Tel: **01392 272417** St Thomas Church Hall

Last Weds of the month, 11 30 – 1 pm

A supportive social group which meets once a month – not specifically a bereavement group, but a chance to meet others who may find themselves in similar circumstances.

Balloonscharity.co.uk

Tel: **01392 826064**

Support for children and young people and their families following a death of someone significant in their lives.

Hope Again

A CRUSE website for young people living with loss.

Helpline: **0808 808 1677**

Grief journey

This is a website with helpful articles and videos about grief and ways of coping for the grieving person and those supporting them.


www.griefjourney.co.uk

FORCE Cancer Support Centre
Corner House, Barrack Road, Exeter EX2 5DW


Tel: **01392 406151**

Email: support@forcecancercharity.co.uk

www.forcecancercharity.co.uk

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