

Help at a time of grieving and bereavement

Getting help at a time of loss

Help and information for those friends, relatives
and carers who are close to a loved one they have lost



St Ann's Hospice

Every day makes a difference

The process of grieving

Why do we grieve?

Grief is the normal reaction which we have to any major loss in our life. Adjusting to the loss of an important person, and the changes this may bring to our lives, can be painful and stressful. However, if we allow ourselves to go through this natural process, we are more likely to be able to enjoy meaningful, satisfying and fulfilling lives again.

Why do people react differently?

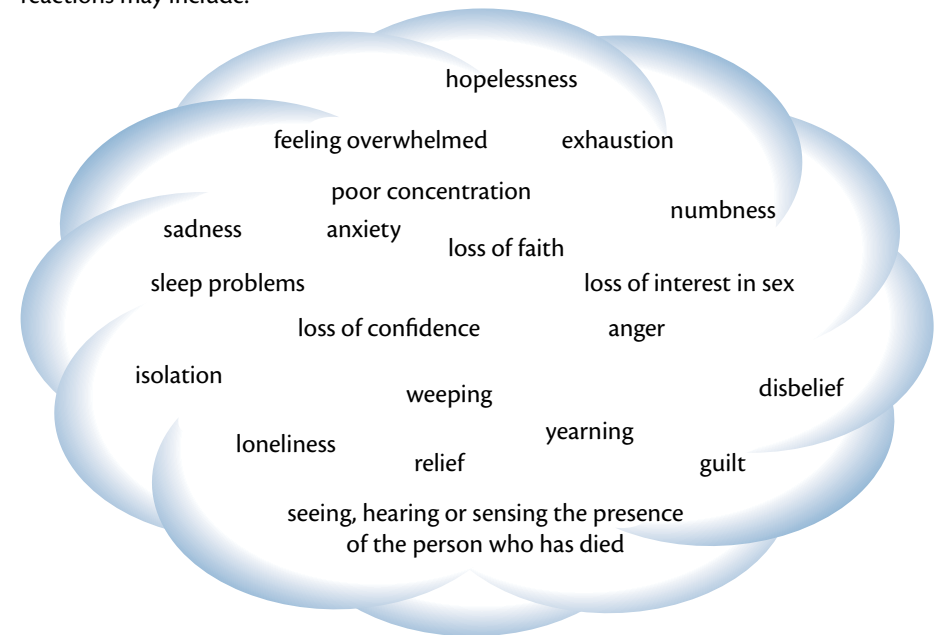
Many factors can affect how we react to a bereavement, including past losses, unresolved issues and how close we were to the person who died. Some people die peacefully and their death is expected, which may give some carers, family and friends a chance to prepare themselves. Others may die suddenly in very distressing circumstances, which can be shocking and hard to believe.



Our reactions to loss

What reactions might people have?

Although we all grieve in our own way and at our own pace, natural and normal reactions may include:



Some people experience symptoms like chest pain, aches and pains, infections, nausea and panic attacks. On the other hand, some of us might overindulge in shopping, smoking or eating, or develop problems with reckless behaviour such as gambling, drugs, alcohol, dangerous driving or taking risks with our sexual health. Similarly, although many bereaved people say they feel they wish their lives were over, only a few consider acting upon these thoughts.

Coping with loss

Getting help and advice

If you are concerned about any of your reactions, or feel you are not coping, it is important to contact your GP for advice and support.

What might help me to cope?

- Try to eat well, sleep well, take regular exercise and have some fresh air.
- Allow yourself time to grieve and adjust.
- Try to accept offers of help.
- Spend some time with those friends and relatives who can be supportive.
- Look after yourself and try to relax.
- Try to avoid making big decisions for at least the first twelve months.
- Consider having some complementary therapies.
- Explore possible gentle exercise like yoga and swimming.
- If you have a faith, try to keep links with others who share your views.



Coping with loss

How can friends and relatives help?

Some friends and relatives may be very supportive, and want to help by providing meals, taking you out for short trips, or offering a listening ear. However, you may find that other friends sometimes avoid you. This might be because they are worried about upsetting you, or don't know what to say. They could be finding it difficult to cope with their own feelings. It may help if you let them know that you would appreciate their support.

How long will I go on feeling this way?

After the initial shock, many people experience intense feelings of loss and grief, which they cannot imagine will change. However, most people slowly begin to adjust to living without the person who has died. The raw pain of grief usually lessens, and gradually, painful memories tend to be replaced by happier ones.

There may be times (such as meaningful dates) when you are taken by surprise and you will find yourself temporarily overwhelmed by grief all over again. This too is likely to lessen with time. Grieving is a very individual experience, there is no set pattern or time limit. For some this may take months, for others years. As you grieve, life will slowly begin to feel more meaningful and enjoyable once more. This might at times feel disloyal to the person who has died, but they and your shared memories will always be a part of you.



Organisations to help the bereaved

National organisations

The WAY Foundation

Help for the young widowed (under 50s).

Tel: 0870 011 3450

Web: www.wayfoundation.org.uk

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide

Tel: 08445 616855 (9:00am-9:00pm)

Compassionate Friends

Support for bereaved parents and families, staffed by bereaved parents.

Tel: 08451 232304 (10:00am-4:00pm and 6:30pm-10:30pm every day)

Web: www.tcf.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care Helpline

Tel: 0870 167 1677

E-mail: helpline@crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Cruse Young Person's Freephone Helpline

Tel: 0808 808 1677

Web: www.rd4u.org.uk

Winston's Wish Helpline

Help for grieving children and their families.

Tel: 0845 20 30 40 5

Web: www.winstonswish.org.uk

Jewish Bereavement

Counselling Service

Tel: 0208 457 9710

Web: www.jvisit.org.uk/jbcs/

Lesbian and Gay

Bereavement Helpline

Tel: 0207 837 3337

(Tue, Wed & Fri 7:30pm-9:00pm)

Web:

www.londonfriend.org.uk/bereavementhelpline

BBC: coping with grief

Web:

www.bbc.co.uk/relationships/coping_with_grief/

Organisations to help the bereaved

Greater Manchester organisations

St Ann's Hospice

Bereavement support and counselling for bereaved people who are already known to the hospice.

Heald Green: 0161 437 8136

Little Hulton: 0161 702 8181

Cruse Bereavement Care

Tel: 0161 236 8103

The Samaritans

Manchester: 0161 236 8000

Stockport: 0161 480 2222

42nd Street

A support service for Manchester young people aged 14-25 under stress.

Tel: 0161 832 0170

Minicom: 0161 831 7616

Web: www.fortysecondstreet.org.uk

The Gaddum Centre

Children and families' bereavement service.

Tel: 0161 834 6069

Web: www.gaddumcentre.co.uk

Beechwood Cancer Care Centre

Supporting adults, children and young people where there is serious illness or bereavement in the family.

Tel: 0161 476 0384

South Manchester Bereavement Group

South Manchester Mental Health Primary Care Team, Brownley Green Clinic. One-to-one and group help (for bereavement from any cause). GP referral required.

Tel: 0161 435 3698

The Roby Centre

Tel: 0161 4257 2653

Web: www.theroby.org.uk



Every day makes a difference

Find out more about us

You can find out more about St Ann's Hospice on our website, or by e-mailing us:

website: www.sah.org.uk **e-mail:** enquiries@sah.org.uk

Textphone users please prefix any of the numbers below with 18001

St Ann's Hospice, Heald Green

(Administration centre)

St Ann's Road North, Heald Green,
Cheadle, Cheshire, SK8 3SZ

Telephone: 0161 437 8136

St Ann's Hospice, Little Hulton

Meadowsweet Lane, Little Hulton,
Worsley, Manchester M28 0FE

Telephone: 0161 702 8181

Neil Cliffe Centre

Wythenshawe Hospital, Southmoor Road,
Wythenshawe, Manchester M23 9LT

Telephone: 0161 291 2912

Key telephone numbers

Charity shops FREEPHONE 0800 612 4679

Fundraising/donations 0161 498 3631

Lottery 0161 498 3642

Get more information

We have a wide range of information leaflets, available both in print and to download from our website. To get your copies, either go to our website or call one of the main hospice telephone numbers.



Comments and feedback

We welcome your feedback: go on line at www.sah.org.uk/feedback, talk to a member of staff or fill in a comments card (found near the red posting boxes around our sites). Formal complaints can be made in writing to our chief executive at our Heald Green address.

