

# HELP & COMFORT



## ‘AN INTRODUCTION TO GRIEF ’

Acceptance of the loss of a loved one is one of the first stages of the grieving process, the funeral is to mourn your loss, but also to celebrate the life of your loved one.

Grief is normal, it is not an illness, and it will not last forever, although there may be times when it seems as though the pain will never end. We hope that this section will help reassure you that you are not alone in what you feel.

We are each individuals and when you lose someone you love, you lose not only a person who was special and unique but a relationship that was unique too.

There is no ‘right’ way to grieve and we each react in our own way. Some people are able to carry on almost normally while others may feel for a time as if they are falling apart.

Nothing can replace the person who has died and yet gradually we do find new sources of strength within ourselves that help us to survive. Some people find it easier to show their feelings than others, but most find at some stage that it helps to talk.

Below is a list of feelings and emotions that many people go through when they experience the loss of a loved one

- Numbness
- Bad tempered
- Afraid
- Jealousy of others
- Loneliness
- Shock
- “I don’t feel anything”
- Change in feelings
- Feeling unwell
- Crying
- Frustration
- Feeling guilty
- Feeling better

In the first days of loss it can be hard to believe life could ever be good or happy again. Of course it will never be the same as it was, but it can be good once more.

## HOW TO FACE THE FIRST STEP

The First Step towards recovery is the hardest of all – facing the reality of death. This is Acceptance. For many people, attending a funeral is the First Step in facing this reality.

The First Step is extremely difficult but one that can be the most significant event in the struggle to recover from the loss of a loved one.

## WHAT IS BEREAVEMENT?

Bereavement means, literally, to be deprived by death. After someone close to you dies, you go through a process of mourning. The visible sign of mourning is grief, which encompasses a wide range of physical, and emotional symptoms that you experience after a loss.

Bereavement is not restricted to people who have lost someone they have known for a long time, it is also experienced by people who have had stillbirths, miscarriages or lost a young baby.

## IS IT NORMAL TO GRIEVE?

Grief is vital in order to accept a deep loss and carry on with your life. If you do not grieve at the time of death, or shortly after, you may keep the grief bottled up inside you. This may cause emotional problems or physical illness later on.

Working through your grief is a painful process, but it makes all the difference to your future emotional and physical well being

## WHAT ARE THE STAGES OF GRIEF?

Everyone is different and each person grieves in his or her own way. However, people commonly experience some stages of grief when they are bereaved. It can be helpful to be aware of these stages and remember those intense emotions and swift changes of mood are normal.

You may experience anger, feelings of guilt, yearning for the person who has died, feel lonely and isolated; these are some of the normal feelings whilst experiencing the stages.

## EMOTIONS

The funeral may be the only time during the bereavement that you feel comfortable in expressing your sorrow in public, but don't worry if you do express your emotions in public; these are both natural reactions.

## WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE TO LOSE SOMEONE?

It robs us of someone we love dearly and shatters our sense of security and possibly identity. You may feel alone and ostracised. Some feelings may seem unnatural. At times you may feel on a high then followed by feelings that are making you low. These are very natural and rational feelings within grief.

## WHAT IS SOMEONE FACED WITH WHEN THEY LOSE SOMEONE?

With a painful and daunting task and the challenge of finding a new sense of life and purpose. Mixed emotions, with highs and lows on good and bad days.

## HOW LONG SHOULD THE FUNERAL TAKE TO ORGANISE?

Don't allow the funeral to be rushed, arrange it when you are ready for the day. A funeral helps you in your grieving so don't rush it. Don't let family or friends hurry you into making any decision until you are ready.