

Grief after a bereavement and where to get help and support

The death of someone close can be shattering. Everyone experiences grief differently; there is no ‘normal’ or ‘right’ way to grieve. How we react will be influenced by many different things, including our age and personality, our cultural background and religious beliefs, our previous experiences of bereavement, our circumstances and how we cope with loss. This leaflet is about what you can do to help yourself, how others can help you, how you can help other people who may be experiencing strong feelings after the death of someone close, and where you can get more advice and support.

Symptoms of bereavement, grief and loss

Bereavement, grief and loss can cause many different symptoms and they affect people in different ways. There is no right or wrong way to feel.

Some of the most common symptoms include:

- shock and numbness – this is usually the first reaction to loss, and people often talk about “being in a daze”
- overwhelming sadness, with lots of crying
- tiredness or exhaustion
- anger – towards the person you have lost or the reasons for your loss
- guilt – for example, guilt about feeling angry, about something you said or did not say, or not being able to stop your loved one dying

These feelings may not be there all the time and powerful feelings may appear unexpectedly.

It is not always easy to recognise when bereavement, grief or loss are the reason you are acting or feeling differently.

Taking care of yourself

It is important that you try and take care of yourself following a bereavement. Some of these tips may seem very simple but they are also very effective when we are in the darkness of our grief.

- **Talk to someone:** One of the most helpful things is to talk about the person who has died and your relationship with them. Who you talk to will depend on you. It may be family, friends, a faith or spiritual advisor, your GP or a support organisation.
- **If you work, talk to your employer:** If you are employed, you are entitled to some bereavement / compassionate leave from work when a loved one dies, although there is no set legal amount of leave. Most employers will try to support you as much as they can, but it is important to let them know if you need time off due to grief.
- **Diet and sleep:** Do try to eat properly and try to get enough rest, even if you cannot sleep.
- **Exercise:** A short walk outside to get some fresh air can help. Even just walking around in your own home can make a difference.

- **Routine:** Sometimes it helps to develop or stick to a routine of eating, sleeping and connecting with others. It may be useful to keep a journal or diary of how you are feeling during this time.

Most importantly, look after yourself. Take one day at a time and give yourself permission to grieve. Don't feel guilty or weak if you're struggling to cope, or need help.

Sources of advice and support

The following pages list some national and local support groups, advice centres and useful organisations for those bereaved in many different circumstances. They are loosely organised by headings but some agencies cover more than one category of bereavement.

1. *For all ages and physical abilities*

Bereavement Advice Centre

Website: bereavementadvice.org

Phone: 0800 634 9494 (Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm)

Suitable for:

- Those recently bereaved who require practical advice on what to do after a loved one dies, such as death notifications, probate and money.

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) – find a counsellor

Website: bacp.co.uk

Phone: see individual counsellor's number

Suitable for:

- Those wishing to access private bereavement counselling services.

Cruse Bereavement Care

Website: www.cruse.org.uk

Phone: West Berkshire Branch Tel: 01635 523 573

Thames Valley Berkshire Area Tel: 01344 411 919

National helpline Tel: 0808 808 1677

Young People's helpline Tel: 0808 808 1677

Email: helpline@cruse.org.uk

Suitable for: Anyone bereaved (including young people and children) who want to talk about their experience confidentially.

Meningitis Now

Website: <https://www.meningitisnow.org/>

Phone: 0808 80 10 388 24-hour nurse led helpline.

Suitable for:

- Those who have been affected by meningitis.

MIND in Berkshire

Website: <https://www.oxfordshiremind.org.uk/about-2/mind-in-berkshire/>

Phone: 01865 247788 Text 07451277973

Email: wokinghamwellbeing@oxfordshiremind.org.uk

Suitable for:

- Wokingham Wellbeing service 18+. Support is available at all Wokingham GP practices as well as at the Wokingham Charity & Community Hub, via face-to-face, telephone or video.

Mind Garden Therapy

Website: www.reading-counselling.co.uk

Phone: 0118-907 0420

Suitable for:

- In person therapy
- Couples therapy and meditation
- Child and adolescent therapy
- Workshops and courses.

National Bereavement Service

Website: www.thenbs.org

Phone: 0800 024 6121

Suitable for:

- National directory of bereavement and loss services.
- Practical support/advice – funeral arrangements, financial information.

Private Bereavement Counselling

Website: counselling-directory.org.uk/bereavement.html

Phone: Please see individual counsellor's number on the website.

Suitable for:

- Those wishing to access private bereavement counselling services.

Roadpeace

Website: www.roadpeace.org

Phone: 0845 4500 355

Email: info@roadpeace.org

Suitable for:

- Practical and emotional support for road traffic victims and bereaved families.

Samaritans

Website: Samaritans.org

E-mail: jo@samaritans.org.uk

Phone: 116 123 or 0330 094 5717 (available every day, all hours)

Suitable for:

- Those requiring a phone and online listening service.

SAMM Support After Murder and Manslaughter

Website: www.samm.org.uk

Phone: 0845 872 3440

E-mail: info@samm.org.uk

Suitable for:

- A self-help group for those bereaved by murder or manslaughter.

Sudden Death

Website: www.suddendeath.org

Phone: 0118 988 9797

Suitable for:

- For friends and relatives of people who die suddenly. (This service is currently oversubscribed so they are not taking on any more cases at present.)

Sue Ryder Online Community

Website: <https://www.sueryder.org/online-bereavement-counselling>

Phone: Online forum only

Suitable for:

- Those looking after at the end of their life or grieving someone who died from a life limiting illness.
- Those looking for a moderated online forum.
- Those less mobile/able to travel.

Terence Higgins Trust

Website: www.tht.org.uk

Phone: 0808 802 1221 (advice line)

Email: info@tht.org.uk

Suitable for:

- A charity providing practical support, help, counselling and advice for anyone concerned about HIV or AIDS.

Thames Hospice

Website: www.thameshospice.org.uk

Phone: 01753 842121 and ask for Counselling Support Services

Suitable for:

- People who live in East Berkshire or South Buckinghamshire.
- People who have been bereaved in the last 12 months. They provide up to twelve individual counselling sessions (in-person and online).
- This team also supports bereaved children in our community when referred by local schools' professionals.

Thames Hospice Co-Connect

Website: www.thameshospice.org.uk/co-connect

Phone: 01753 847300 (9am-5pm, 7 days a week)

Suitable for:

- Free of charge counselling bereavement support service for adults whose bereavement has been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.
- Anyone who has been bereaved since January 2020 is eligible to access.

WAY Widowed and young

Website: www.widowedandyoung.org.uk

Phone: 0300 201 0051

Suitable for:

- People aged 50 or under when their partner dies.

2. For those bereaved by cancer

The Loss Foundation

Website: thelossfoundation.org

Phone: 0300 200 4112

Suitable for:

- People bereaved by cancer (or COVID).
- Those able and willing to travel to London for peer-led support groups. They also offer a 10 week programme of grief group therapy.

Macmillan Cancer Support

Website: www.macmillan.org.uk

Phone: 0808 808 00 00

Email: Macmillan.information@royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Suitable for:

- Offers free, confidential support to people living with cancer and their loved ones.

3. For bereaved parents

4Louis

Website: <https://4louis.co.uk/>

Phone: 01915 144473

Suitable for:

- Miscarriage, stillbirth and child loss support.

Antenatal Results & Choices

Website: <https://www.arc-uk.org/>

Phone: 0845 077 2290 or 0207 713 7486

Suitable for:

- Parents, providing non-directive information and support before, during and after antenatal screening.

The Compassionate Friends

Website: tcf.org.uk

Phone: 0345 123 2304 (every day of the year, 10am – 4pm and 7pm – 11pm)

E-mail: helpline@tcf.org.uk

Suitable for:

- Support groups for those bereaved through the death of a child of any age and from any cause.
- Those requiring online, telephone or face-to-face support by volunteer bereaved parents.

Dads & Lads Network

Website: <https://nine4norah.co.uk/dads-lads-network>

Suitable for:

- Men who have lost a child.
- Bereaved dads and men suffering from mental health issues a safe space to talk.

The Mariposa Trust 'Saying Goodbye'

Website: <https://www.sayinggoodbye.org/>

Phone: 0300 323 1350

Suitable for:

- Support for those who have lost a child at any stage.
- Support for anyone who is grieving the fact that they have not been able to have children.

RBFT Maternity Bereavement Team

Phone: 07500 123912

Email: rbft.bereavementmidwives@nhs.net

Suitable for:

- Support for parents who have lost a child at any stage at RBFT.

Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Society (SANDS)

Website: www.uk-sands.org

Phone: 0808 164 3332

E-mail: helpline@uk-sands.org

Suitable for:

- For those affected by the death of a baby.
- A support service for parents and families.

TAMBA

Website: <https://twinstrust.org/bereavement.html>

Suitable for:

- Parents and carers of twins, triplets or more who have died whether it was during or after pregnancy.

Willows Support Group

Website: www.willowssupportgroup.co.uk/

Suitable for:

- Support group for parents in Reading who have lost a child. The group is made up of parents who have lost babies at various stages.

4. For children and young people

ARC – Wokingham

Website: <https://arcweb.org.uk/>

Email: office@arcweb.org.uk

Support for:

- Free youth counselling for those 11yrs +.
- Low cost adult counselling.

Child Bereavement UK Support line

Website: childbereavementuk.org

Phone: 0800 02 888 40 (Monday – Friday, 9am – 5pm)

Suitable for:

- Bereaved children and families.
- When a child is facing bereavement or a parent or significant person has received a palliative diagnosis.

Childline

Website: childline.org.uk

Phone: 0800 1111

Suitable for:

- Children and young people wanting online/phone counselling for a variety of problems, including bereavement.
- Children and young people looking for age-appropriate information.

Child Death Helpline

Website: www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk

Phone: 0800 282 986 / 0808 800 6019

Suitable for:

- Anyone affected by the death of a child of any age from pre-birth to adult, however recently or long ago.

Daisy's Dream

Website: daisysdream.org.uk

Phone: 0118 934 2604

Email: info@daisysdream.org.uk

Suitable for:

- Children, young people up to the age of 19 years and their families affected by life threatening illness or bereavement.
- Families looking for peer group support.
- Children and young people who want to access one-to-one outreach support, at home or at school.
- Those concerned about a child or young person who is affected by serious illness and/or bereavement and want to access telephone and email advice.

Grief Encounter

Website: griefencounter.org.uk

Phone: 0808 802 0111

Suitable for:

- Children, teenagers and families having experienced the death of a parent or sibling.
- Those looking for counselling, group activities, camps, online services.
- Those looking for long term support.
- Those wishing or needing to access online counselling services.

Hope Again

Website: hopeagain.org.uk

Phone: 0808 808 1677 (Monday to Friday, 09:30 a.m. to 05:00 pm)

Suitable for:

- Children and young people wanting online support.
- Face to face meetings available via the local Cruse Bereavement organisation.

Institute of Family Therapy

Website: www.ift.org.uk

Phone: 020 7391 9150

Suitable for:

- Counselling for couples and families dealing with a variety of issues including bereavement.

The Lullaby Trust

Website: www.lullabytrust.org.uk

Phone: 0808 802 6868 (free helpline)

Email: support@lullabytrust.org.uk

Suitable for:

- Offers telephone, e-mail and befriending service.

No 5

Website: no5.org.uk

Phone: 0118-901-5668

Email: info@no5.org.uk

Suitable for:

- Young people mental health line for 11-25 year olds.

SeeSaw

Website: www.saw.org.uk

Phone: 01865 744768

Email: info@seesaw.org.uk

Suitable for:

- Children and young people who need support due to a parent or significant person who has received a palliative diagnosis or who has died.

Winston's wish

Website: winstonswish.org

Phone: 08088 020 021

Email: info@winstonswish.org (general)

Email: ask@winstonswish.org (support)

Suitable for:

- Children and young people looking for support after the death of a parent or sibling.
- Children and young people requiring telephone or online support.

5. Adults over 50

Way Up

Website: way-up.co.uk

Phone: Available upon joining

Suitable for:

- Those bereaved and aged in their 50s and 60s looking for a peer support forum, both online and face-to-face

The Cinnamon Trust

Website: cinnamon.org.uk/home

Phone: 01736 757 900

Suitable for:

- The National Charity for the elderly, the terminally ill and their pets.

6. **LGBT Community**

London Friend LGBT Bereavement Helpline

Website: www.londonfriend.org.uk

Phone: 0300 330 0630 (Tuesdays 7.30pm-9.30pm)

Suitable for:

- Members of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender community expecting or experiencing bereavement, as well as their family and friends.
- Includes counselling for bereavement.

7. **Bereavement through suicide**

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS)

Website: www.uk-sobs.org.uk

Phone: 0300 111 5065 (Monday – Friday, 09:00 – 21:00)

E-mail: sobs.support@hotmail.com

Suitable for:

- Those bereaved by suicide, looking for both online and face-to-face support groups.
- Those looking for a helpline and email support.

8. **Online resources**

Grief after bereavement or loss – NHS webpage

Website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/coping-with-bereavement/>

Children and bereavement – NHS webpage

Website: www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/children-and-bereavement

9. **Bereavement Café**

Bereavement Café and Living with Loss

Website: www.saintbarnabas.org.uk/come-and-see/open-church/living-with-loss

St Barnabas Parish Centre, Emmer Green, RG4 8RA.

Phone: Gillian Wilson 0118 9478772

Bereavement Café

Suitable for:

- Takes place on the 1st Friday of each month, 2.00 –3.30 pm. The Bereavement Café is drop-in for anyone who has been bereaved, either recently or some time ago, to meet together for an informal chat and mutual support.

Living with Loss

Suitable for:

- Takes place on the 3rd Friday of each month, 2.00 – 3.30 pm. Living with Loss is a monthly group that provides the opportunity for anyone affected by any kind of loss to find support from others who understand from their own experience how overwhelming feelings of loss can be.

10. Sign Health

The Deaf Health Charity Sign Health

Website: [signhealth.org.uk/with-deaf-people/psychological-therapy/therapy-service](https://www.signhealth.org.uk/with-deaf-people/psychological-therapy/therapy-service)

Text: 07984 439473

Call: 07966 976747

Email: therapy@signhealth.org.uk

Suitable for:

- Free psychological therapy in British sign language 18 +.

11. Urgent support

Campaign against living miserably

Website: <https://www.thecalmzone.net/>

Phone: 0800 58 58 58 5pm-midnight, 365 days per year

The Mix

Website: www.themix.org.uk/get-support/speak-to-our-team/the-mix-counselling-service

Phone: 08088 84994 Call 4-11pm

24hr crisis messenger Text THEMIX to 85258

Suitable for:

- Essential support for under 25 years.

Shout

Website: [giveusashout.org](https://www.giveusashout.org)

Text SHOUT to 85258 24/7

Suitable for:

- 24/7 crisis text support.

12. Other useful organisations

Age UK Free Helpline

Website: www.ageuk.org.uk

Phone: 0800 6781602 / 0118 950 2480 (Reading)

Email: info@ageukreading.org.uk or contact@ageuk.org.uk

Suitable for:

- Fact sheets and advice regarding funerals benefits etc.

Citizens Advice Bureau (Reading)

Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Website: www.rcab.org.uk (Reading)

Phone: 03444 111 306

Reading Borough Council

Website: www.reading.gov.uk

SSAFA Forces Help

Website: www.ssafa.org.uk/berkshire

Phone: 0800 731 4880 / 0118 95 73393

Suitable for:

- National charity providing practical, financial and emotional help for serving and ex-service men, women and their families.

NHS Organ Donation

Website: www.organdonation.nhs.uk

Phone: 0300 123 23 23

Intensive Care Society

Website: www.ics.ac.uk

Reading Coroner's Office

Reading Town Hall, Blagrove Street, Reading RG1 1QH

Website: www.reading.gov.uk/coroners

Phone: 0118 937 2300

E-mail: Coroner@reading.gov.uk

**Royal Berkshire NHS Foundation Trust
Bereavement Office and Medical Examiner Service**

Website: www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/our-services/bereavement-office-and-medical-examiner-service/

Phone: 0118 322 8066 / 7059 (Bereavement Office)

Phone: 0118 322 7237 / 7239 (Medical Examiner Service)

E-mail: rbft.bereavementoffice@nhs.net (Bereavement Office)

E-mail: rbft.medexaminers@nhs.net (Medical Examiner Service)

13. Register offices and cemeteries

Bracknell / Finchampstead Register Office

Time Square, Market Street, Bracknell RG12 1JD

Phone: 01344 352000

Newbury Register Office

Shaw House, Church Road, Shaw, Newbury RG14 2DR.

Phone: 01635 279230

Reading Register Office

Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading RG1 2LU

Phone: 0118 937 3533 (0118 937 3737 – out of hours)

Wokingham Register Office

Civic Offices, Shute End, Wokingham RG40 1WH

Phone: 0118 974 6554

Easthampstead Park Crematorium / Cemetery

South Road, Bracknell RG40 3DW

Phone: 01344 420314

Mays Lane Cemetery

Mays Lane, Earley, Reading RG6 7DG

Phone: 0118 986 8995

Pangbourne Hill Cemetery

Pangbourne, Reading RG8 8JS

Phone: 0118 984 1118

Reading Crematorium

All Hallows Road, Caversham RG4 5LP

Phone: 0118 937 2200

St Michaels Church Cemetery

The Rectory, Routh Lane, Tilehurst RG30 4JX

Phone: 0118 942 7331

Shaw Cemetery

Shaw Hill, Newbury RG14 2EQ

Phone: 01635 40096

14. Notes

Use this space to make a note of any useful information or contact numbers you may find useful.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Lisa Richardson, Service Manager – RBFT Bereavement Office and Medical Examiner Service and Palliative Care Team, May 2023

Next review due: May 2025

Compassionate

Aspirational

Resourceful

Excellent