

UNDERSTANDING GRIEF

Every person grieves differently but here are some tips that can help.

- **Grief is normal** - it is part of what it is to be human and to have feelings.
- **Grief is the price we pay for love** - we feel this pain because the person who died meant so much to us.
- **Grief is a process through which we travel** - but we will emerge from it.
- **There is no standard way to grieve** - other people's advice may be helpful, but grieving is personal.
- **Grief takes time** - often much longer than we or others may think.
- **It's okay to both grieve and live** - if you find yourself not thinking about the person who has died or enjoying yourself without them it is alright.
- **Grief is hard for other people** - they often don't know what to say, and may say the wrong things, but it is usually because they care.
- **Grief can be lonely** - it can lead to depressing thoughts and even thoughts of suicide. It is alright to experience, and to express, these thoughts.

It often helps to find someone to talk to who will listen

ORGANISATIONS WHO CAN HELP

Child Bereavement UK

www.childbereavementuk.org
0800 02 88840

Citizen's Advice UK

www.cas.org.uk / 03444 111 444

Cruse Bereavement Care

www.cruse.org.uk / 0844 477 94000

Samaritans

www.samaritans.org.uk / 116 123

A directory of national and local bereavement support organisations is available at:

Halton

www.haltonccg.nhs.uk
www.halton.gov.uk/mhinfopoint

Warrington

www.warringtonccg.nhs.uk
www.happyoksad.org.uk

Urgent mental help support

NHS North Boroughs Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust has a dedicated 24/7 mental health crisis line for people living in Halton and Warrington. Call 0800 051 1508.



Bereavement Advice

Understanding your grief and feelings

Produced in partnership by NHS Halton Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS Warrington Clinical Commissioning Group, Halton Borough Council and Warrington Borough Council.

TAKE CARE

- **Accidents** - concentration can be difficult so take extra care, even with simple tasks, like making a cup of tea.
- **Alcohol** - drinking alcohol can make you feel more depressed and it is easy to become overly dependent on it.
- **Drugs** - speak to your GP if you are using prescribed drugs to dull the pain of grief. It is easy to become overly dependent.
- **Driving** - when concentration is poor driving can be dangerous. Ask someone else to drive.
- **Eating** - your appetite may be reduced, or it may be just too much effort to make a meal. Nourishment helps us to cope. Some people may "comfort eat" but this can also be unhealthy.
- **Illness** - grief can make us more vulnerable to illness causing symptoms such as back pain and stomach upsets. If these persist, speak with your GP.
- **Nightmares** - dreaming about the person who has died is normal but contact your doctor if you have continuous nightmares.
- **Sleeping** - grief can disturb normal sleep but if it persists, speak to your GP.
- **Suicidal Thoughts** - It is common to question the meaning of life following a death, and thoughts of suicide are not unusual but if thoughts persist, contact your GP. If you feel unable to keep yourself safe and there is immediate risk to life, call 999, or go to A&E.

You might experience some of the following feelings:

- **Anger** - at what has happened or at the people or with the person
- **Confusion** - as nothing may make sense, difficulty in concentrating
- **Disappointment** - losing what might have been, the future may be different
- **Disbelief** - that the death is real
- **Gratitude** - for good times shared
- **Helplessness** - not knowing what to do next, feeling you cannot cope
- **Afraid** of what lies ahead, about our own life or death
- **Guilt** - about things we could or should have done, about how we feel
- **Loneliness** - missing the person's physical presence
- **Regret** - at things said or not said
- **Relief** - that their suffering is over
- **Sadness** - deep and painful emptiness.

WHAT CAN HELP?

We need to grieve in our own way.

Don't expect too much of yourself

Grief is a major event in our lives. It affects us in many ways. If there are things you want to do yourself, try to do them. If there are things others can do for you, let them.

Take your time

Grieving takes time. Plan what you need to do and realise that even simple tasks may take longer.

Remember...

Memories are helpful they link us to the person who has died. It can be helpful to share your memories and hear those of others. Photographs, items of clothing, favourite music, and similar things can help to make memories real.

Talk

Sharing your thoughts, your memories, your fears and your doubts is one of the most important ways to help yourself.

Finally, know when to ask for help

The journey of grief is a long one as we slowly get used to the absence of the person. It is time to ask for help if:

- Thoughts of ending your own life become more frequent
- Your nightmares about the death persist, or you cannot bear to think about what happened
- You feel, after a few months, that the pain of loss is just as sharp as it was at the time, or your emotions are still in turmoil
- If your relationships with family or friends are becoming strained, or you feel your performance at work is suffering.