

St Christopher's

Bereavement

**Information from
the St Christopher's
Bereavement Service**

Bereavement

Most people will experience bereavement at some time in their life. Everyone reacts 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 the 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 perhaps frightening.

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

Most people will experience similar feelings – initial shock and disbelief, perhaps numbness, through to periods of utter confusion, intense pain and questioning. There may be anger, regrets, searching for the person who has died and feeling very alone. Sometimes you may feel very overwhelmed and at other times more in control and able to get on with day to day activities.

Grieving is not usually a smooth process; 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. It is not unusual to feel angry – anger 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.

You may feel restless and find it difficult to sleep. It is not unusual to experience mood swings. Although you may not feel like eating it is important not to neglect your health and well-being. If you are worried about your health you may wish to consult 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.

Help during your bereavement

If at any time you feel that you need help during your bereavement please contact St Christopher's Bereavement Service. For details of what the service offers and who to contact, please see the separate leaflet *An introduction to the St Christopher's Bereavement Service*.

If you live outside our catchment areas but are able to travel, we can offer you support at the hospices. Alternatively, if you are looking for more local support, contact your GP surgery or library for details of local bereavement services.



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