




Stand-by-me
Bereavement Support


When Someone You Love Dies

A guide to help young people grieve.

This guide will provide information and offer support to think about what would help to work through your grief, and to reassure you about what is happening. It will also tell you where to get extra help and support if you need to.



Why not show this guide to someone close to you to talk about what they can do to help. You can show it to parents, family members and teachers.



It can be useful to help start conversations that could help them understand what your grief is like for you.

What is grief like?

You may have been told that everyone's grief is different and that there is no right or wrong way to grieve the death of your special person. This is true because your relationship with that person was unique to you, that is what made the relationship special, however, hearing that everyone's grief is different can cause you to worry about what you are thinking and feeling.

Although no two people will experience grief identically, grief can cause 'common reactions'; things that we know you are likely to feel in some way, depending on your circumstances.

Grief in the early days and weeks

The feelings and reactions that we have when we are first told that someone has died can be very different to what we feel later, especially if we did not expect them to die.

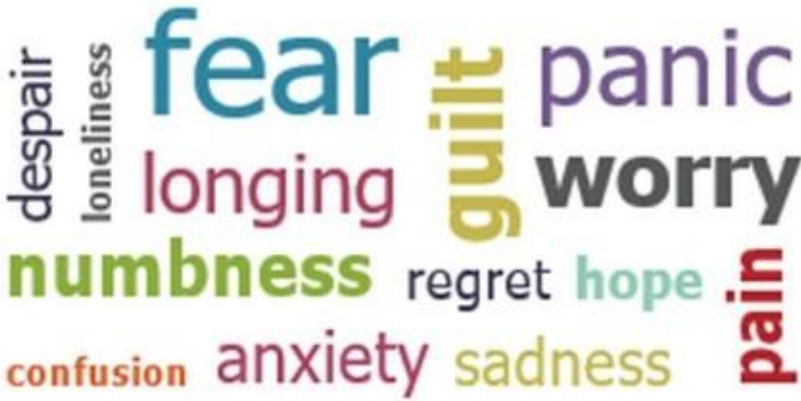
Common reactions that you are likely to have early on are:

- Feelings of shock, panic or disbelief
- Racing heart, feeling faint or breathless
- Feeling numb and emotionless
- Wanting to cry a lot and feeling overwhelmed by our emotions, especially fear and guilt
- Disturbed sleep
- Finding it hard to return to usual routines or unable to concentrate
- Feeling fearful and wanting to stay close to our family and home

These reactions can feel very intense and scary but are normal. They will gradually change over the first few days and weeks.

During this time the support we have from family, friends and school or college is important to help manage these intense reactions.

Common emotions when we grieve



Even though people grieve differently, the bereaved have told us of the common emotions that we often experience after someone has died. These can and will change and some will be more powerful than others at certain times like anniversaries, birthdays, or other special times.

Common reactions later on

After the first few weeks, your grief reactions will change.

Some feelings and thoughts will return more than once.

These can include:

- Missing the person and longing to be near them
- Worries because you don't understand enough about what has happened or being able to remember them
- Difficulties managing strong emotions and confusing thoughts when you think of the person or how they died
- Feeling more fearful and worried than before, especially for the safety of other family members
- Feeling angry about what has happened and become easily frustrated even by small things
- Worrying about your health and the future
- Wanting to understand what you think might have happened to your loved one
- Needing to understand your spiritual beliefs better and why we think this has happened to us
- Difficulties sleeping and having nightmares
- Not wanting to do the same things as before or keep up friendships
- Difficulties managing schoolwork deadlines and other pressures

What can help you grieve well?




Grief can affect people differently and there is no right or wrong way to grieve but we know that there are some things that can help us to work through our grief.

This wheel can help you to think about what would help you to be able to manage your grief. There are some more explanations of each section on the following pages.


More about what can help you work through grief

Continued routines and activities



When someone dies a lot of things can change suddenly and your emotions can feel out of control. Having familiar routines, doing activities and hobbies like before, and keeping in touch with friends, especially in the earlier days can be very helpful to you. It is important to have time out from your grief to relax and do other things because grief can be physically and emotionally exhausting.

Emotional support from parents and adults around you



Having support and understanding from people around you is the best thing that can help you to grieve. You may want to have support from some members of your family but worry about upsetting them. You cannot make it worse for them by telling them how it is affecting you. If you do not feel able to ask them for help other family members or staff at school can be a big help too.

If you want someone to talk to right now why not text the Winston's Wish 24/7 crisis messenger service (Text WW to 85258) or visit Hope Again or Help2makesense.




Clear, accurate, understandable information

We all have lots of questions after someone has died and need good information about what has happened to help us manage fears and worries and to know that it was not our fault. Why not keep a record of your questions as you think of them to help you talk with parents, carers, or health professionals about how to get the answers you need? There may be some questions that nobody knows the answer to but those that you feel comfortable talking with can help you to accept that some things cannot be explained or are beyond our control.



Opportunities to talk about difficult memories

Sometimes after someone dies, we have difficult memories about what has happened, or thoughts about what we imagine has happened. It can be hard to understand them and manage the effects they cause. Talking about these memories with someone is important to help you know whether your memories are accurate or not, and to help the brain make sense of them. Until it can do this it can get stuck causing irrational fear and anxiety, nightmares, and sleep problems.




Help to recognise your emotions and express them well

Although everyone's grief is different there are many common feelings we experience. Understanding these can help reassure you that you are not going mad or are bad for feeling these things. Talking to someone that you trust and who listens to your worries cannot make the person who died come alive again, but it can help you feel understood, help you understand yourself and what you are feeling and find ways to manage those feelings well.



Help to strengthen memories of your loved one

It is normal to worry that we may lose our memories of the person who died. Memories are the way we feel connected to the person we love; making a memory jar, box or book can be an important way to rehearse and strengthen memories and help you keep memories strong. Photos, special objects, perfumes, music, and other mementoes can all be included in these and become a way for you to talk to family and friends about the person who died.




To be able to understand what happened as part of your whole life story

After a bereavement, it can be easy for us to lose sight of lots of good things about life and it can be hard to believe that things will get better. As time goes by you may have a chance to think about this differently. What has happened to you will always be an important part of your history but thinking of it as a part of your whole life can help make it feel less overwhelming.

Thinking about the kind of inspiration your loved one has given you by their personality or how they lived their life, and how that can help you now will help you still feel connected to them. You can think about the legacy that they left you because of what you learned from them.

Renewed hopes and plans for the future



Although things feel very bad right now this will not always be the case and it is good to remind ourselves about our ambitions and the things we would like to do in the future.

Sometimes it can be good to think about how proud our loved ones would be of our plans, ambitions and what we can achieve. This can help make what we do at home, school, college, and later life feel more meaningful and positive. It will help us feel more confident, building courage and determination for the future.

Who can help you to manage your grief?

People close to you

The most important people who can help you to grieve are family, especially parents or carers. However, your loss may be that of your parent or carer or they may be grieving too and in the early days, it may be difficult for them to do this as you would like. Other members of the family such as grandparents, aunts and uncles, close family friends etc., can be good to talk to. Whoever is supporting you, perhaps you can show them this guide and discuss it together?

People at school or college

Staff at school or college can be a big help after a bereavement. If you can, speak to someone that you find easy to talk to. They can help by arranging to help manage any difficulties getting into school or completing schoolwork after the bereavement. They can also help by letting other staff know that for a time you may need extra help and support. They may be able to arrange to be the person in school/college that you can rely on for support when things are tough for you.

If you find it hard to begin to talk to a member of staff about this perhaps you can email them or send them a note asking for their help.

How can you help yourself?

No doubt having people to help us is important, but it is also important to think about the things that we can do for ourselves when they are not around.

There are lots of ideas and suggestions to help you grieve that you can find by visiting the websites on the next page that were created for and with the help of bereaved teens.

How can you find extra help?

Even though there are things that you, your family and friends can do to help you to manage your grief, sometimes you might need a little extra help. Counsellors and trained bereavement workers can help if you are having difficulties with some of the things mentioned earlier, or if you don't have people close to you who can support you as you need.

If you can talk with someone in your family, doctor or trusted person in school or college they can help you think about what other support might be helpful.

Bereavement support online

There are ways to get support online from organisations that specialise in helping bereaved young people. These are sites created by young people, for young people so you may find them very helpful because you can find out what other young people feel. They also have helplines with people to chat to.

Hope again

<https://www.hopeagain.org.uk>

Cruse Bereavement Care young people's website and helpline

Help2makesense

<https://help2makesense.org>

Winston's Wish support for young people, helpline and Crisis Messenger

Grief Encounter

<https://www.griefencounter.org.uk/young-people/>

Helpline support for young people

Hope Support Services - help for young people after

Coronavirus<http://www.hopesupport.org.uk>

Other helpful sites that have trained people for you to talk to are:

KOOTH

<https://www.kooth.com>

Free, confidential online support for all your worries

Childline

<https://www.childline.org.uk>

or call 0800 1111

Emergency Support

It is important to seek help if you are worried about yourself in any way or need help in a crisis. These organisations can help and are available 24/7

Winston's Wish Crisis Messenger

<https://www.winstonswish.org/crisis-messenger>

TEXT WW to 85258

Young Minds Crisis Messenger Service

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/get-urgent-help>

TEXT YM to 85258



111 Walsworth Road, Hitchin, Herts, SG4 9SP

www.stand-by-me.org.uk info@stand-by-me.org.uk

Content Acknowledgements to:

Patricia Taylor MA Grad Dip

Registered Member BACP (British Association of Counsellors & Psychotherapists)

Supported by:

