

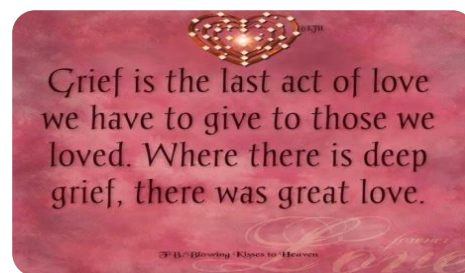
## Dealing with Bereavement during Covid-19 Pandemic

Here at Wellbeing we understand that as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic we may experience the death of one or more family members, friends, colleagues and/or neighbours. Bereavement is one of the most severe forms of psychological distress we are likely to experience. **Grief is our natural response to death and is not a mental health issue but a normal process.** However, a small number of individuals will struggle to accept their loss and this can result in complications in the grieving process.



Following a death we may feel shock, denial, anger, sadness, anger, guilt and anxiety. We may just feel numb or feel overwhelmed. Please know that this is normal. We may also have difficulty sleeping, reduced appetite, no interest in the things which we used to enjoy, lack energy, struggle to concentrate and we may want to withdraw from others. Again all of this is normal behaviour following bereavement. All of these intense changes usually lessen and diminish as we come to terms with the death.

The length of time for this process is different for each person, however most people will usually return to their normal activities within a period of six months following the death. Factors which impact this process are whether the death was expected or sudden, our relationship with the deceased, circumstances of the death and our social support network.



The current Covid-19 pandemic presents a number of challenges in dealing with grief. We may not have had the opportunity to be with our loved ones or to say goodbye to them. We may not have been able to observe our traditional practices such as wakes, shiva etc. The number of people currently able to attend a funeral has been limited and in most cases the maximum would be 10. This can be anxiety provoking in deciding who should attend. In addition, anyone experiencing symptoms of Covid-19 would be unable to attend and have to self-isolate. Furthermore, people are unable to comfort one another due to the social distancing, which must also be observed at funerals. These issues will be upsetting and distressing for many individuals.



However, it is important that we maintain social contact with others by alternative methods. We can speak with loved ones on the telephone and Facetime (iPhone) or online via Skype or Facebook or e-mail. This social support is imperative in ensuring we minimise any complications of bereavement.

## What CAN you control?

### Planning a Funeral....?

- Check with the funeral director/celebrant how many people can attend as this varies.
- Check with the funeral director/celebrant whether the service can be streamed online via church services online or YouTube. If not, ask if you can record it or take pictures to share with others who could not attend later.
- Let people know what day and time the funeral/service is at as they may want to remember the deceased in their own way at that time e.g. light a candle, play their favourite music, look at photographs.



### After the Funeral/Service....?

- Speak with those who could not attend the funeral/service and let them know how it went and share memories.

### Days, Weeks and Months After....?

- Different people will feel different things and that is okay too. Not all family members will react in the same way following bereavement. Some may want to talk about the deceased all the time whereas others may not mention them at all. It is important just to be able to be honest with those around us and acknowledge that we each have our own ways of coping.
- Stay connected. Remain connected with your social group and loved ones.
- Try to establish some form of a daily routine (see Wellbeing Resource for Mental Health during Covid-19) although this will be much reduced following a death.
- Use this time to remember your loved one and perhaps play their favourite song or write them a letter to say what you would have liked to have said if you didn't get the opportunity before their death.
- Plan a memorial service for your loved one once restrictions have been lifted and life is resuming to pre-pandemic.



SUPPORT

Having suicidal thoughts? Discuss with a loved one, call Samaritans on **116 123** or access your **G.P.** or **Crisis Service** via **NHS** on **111**.

**Our recommended resources:**

<b>Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland</b>	Offers counselling specifically in relation to bereavement. <b>Currently offering telephone support only.</b> Please visit: <a href="http://www.crusescotland.org.uk">www.crusescotland.org.uk</a> Telephone: 0845 600 2227.
<b>Sudden</b>	Offering support to people bereaved suddenly ( <i>for any reason, including Covid-19</i> ) who did not have time to say goodbye to their loved ones. Please visit: <a href="http://www.suddendeadth.org/">http://www.suddendeadth.org/</a> E-mail: <a href="mailto:admin@brake.org.uk">admin@brake.org.uk</a> Telephone: 01484 559909.
<b>PETAL (People experiencing trauma and loss)</b>	Offers face-to-face counselling specifically to those bereaved by murder or suicide. <b>Currently offering telephone and online support.</b> Please visit: <a href="http://www.petalsupport.com">www.petalsupport.com</a> . Telephone: 01698 324502.
<b>Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide</b>	Self help support for people 18 years or older who have been bereaved by suicide. Operates 9am-9pm Mon – Fri. <i>Offering support Sat &amp; Sun at present also.</i> Please visit: <a href="http://www.uksobs.org">www.uksobs.org</a> . E-mail: <a href="mailto:email.support@uksobs.org">email.support@uksobs.org</a> . Telephone: 0300 111 5065.
<b>SFAD (Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol and Drugs)</b>	Offers online support and/or puts you in contact with a counsellor in your area. Please visit: <a href="http://www.sfad.org.uk">www.sfad.org.uk</a> . E-mail: <a href="mailto:helpline@sfad.org.uk">helpline@sfad.org.uk</a> . Telephone: 0808 010 1011.
<b>Child Bereavement UK</b>	Offers face-to-face support for bereaved children and young people up to 25 years of age. They also offer telephone support and groups for families and groups for young people. Support can be for the loss of a child and/or for children who have been bereaved. <b>Currently offering support by telephone or online live chat.</b> Please visit: <a href="http://www.childbereavementuk.org/glasgow">www.childbereavementuk.org/glasgow</a> . Telephone: 0800 028 8840.
<b>WAY – Widowed &amp; Young</b>	Offer peer-to-peer support to widows/widowers bereaved before age 51. Please visit: <a href="https://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk/">https://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk/</a>
<b>Wellbeing</b>	Our website offers a variety of self-help materials, groups, and courses for varying problems that you may be facing. Anyone can download the self- help materials. Please visit: <a href="http://www.wellbeing-glasgow.org.uk/">www.wellbeing-glasgow.org.uk/</a>