

# Dealing with grief in your teens



The death of someone close to you is the most difficult experience anyone has to face. There is no 'right' way of feeling when someone close to you dies. **Everyone feels their loss differently.** Relationships are unique and the feelings you experience are unique to you.

You may not have had to face the death of someone close to you before and the strong feelings that you experience may make you confused, frightened and very lonely. Life may have been a struggle when the person that has died was ill and now they have died your feelings of emptiness and loss may feel overwhelming.

Grief is the 'flip side' of caring for someone. When someone we care about dies the strong emotions of pain and loss are what we describe as grief. Grieving is the process of facing the loss of someone you care about.

Death is not a subject that people often talk about. People around you may find talking hard as it means facing up to difficult issues and emotions. Everyone is affected in different ways.

## Common Emotions

When someone close to you dies the feelings you experience are very strong. They may be like a rollercoaster of strong emotions. At first you may just feel numb and empty. You may even believe that the person you loved will come walking back through the door.

**Anger** - It is very natural to feel angry, you may ask "why has this happened to me?" You may feel that it isn't fair that the person you love has died. You may even feel angry at the person who has died. This is a normal reaction.

**Anxiety** - You may feel anxious about being separated from other people in your life. You might not want to be left on your own. Talking about this may help.

**Relief** - As part of the grieving process it is not unusual to feel a sense of relief that the person you love has died. It may be that they were very ill and in a lot of pain.

**Depression** - Depression is not a weakness. It is part of saying goodbye to someone you care about. It may make you feel that there is no point in anything anymore. You can feel you are in a very lonely place.

**Sadness** - When an important person in your life dies you can feel an overwhelming sadness. A sadness more painful and profound than you have ever felt before. A feeling so big, its almost physical. Sadness is a normal feeling in the grieving process, part of learning to adapt to life without that person in it.

**Loneliness** - Grief can be very isolating. Even though the loss may be shared, each person's grief is unique. It can be normal to feel alone even when you are surrounded by other people who care. You may feel that nobody understands.

**Guilt and blame** - When someone dies a lot of people feel guilty and blame themselves for various reasons. Regretting things that you said or did, wishing that things had been different. Try to be kind to yourself.

**Tiredness and physical symptoms** - The whole process of grieving is emotionally and physically exhausting. You may find that you sleep or eat more or less than usual.

## Ways of Coping

**The funeral** - Funerals play an important role in the grieving process. They let everyone remember and say goodbye to the person who has died. They are a time when family and friends can come together to share their memories and support one another. You can chose whether or not you go to the funeral. If you have never been to one before and you don't know what to expect talk to somebody about it.

**Remembering** - it's natural to spend a lot of time remembering the person who has died. These memories may be painful at first. It sometimes helps to write about the person who has died or make a memory box containing items such as letters and photos. This can help you now, and will become a treasured possession in the future.

**Good and bad days** - You will probably find that you have good days and bad days. At first it may seem that there are more bad days than good, however with time this will change. Don't feel guilty when you have a good day. Special occasions such as birthdays can be particularly difficult times.

**Friends** - Some of your friends may find it difficult to talk to you at first. They may be worried that they will upset you. If you can, let them know how you feel and ask them to be there for you when you need them - that's what friends are for.

**School and college** - Some people need more time than others before returning to school or college. Make sure your teachers know what has happened so they can support you.

## Who can you turn to for help?

Speak to your family members. Support each other, talk, share memories, laugh and cry together. Speak to others who are good listeners and you know you can trust. If you feel you can't cope and want to talk in confidence, you can see your GP.

For details of other people and places that can help please contact Irene Mothersill, Bereavement Services Coordinator on 0191 285 0063 or email [irenemothersill@stoswaldsuk.org](mailto:irenemothersill@stoswaldsuk.org).

**The death of someone that you care about has probably made a great change in your life. With time you will start to carry on and rebuild your life.**

## Useful Websites

**Winston's Wish** - help for bereaved children and their families.  
[www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)

**Child Bereavement Trust** - online information for young people who've been bereaved.  
[www.childbereavement.org.uk](http://www.childbereavement.org.uk)

**riprap** - When a parent has cancer.  
[www.riprap.org.uk](http://www.riprap.org.uk)

**RD4U** - developed by Cruse Bereavement Care's Youth Involvement Project which aims to support young people after the death of someone close to them.  
[Wwww.rd4u.org.uk](http://Wwww.rd4u.org.uk)

**We are a registered charity and rely on voluntary donations and legacies to enable us to care for patients and families. To find out more about our work please visit [www.stoswaldsuk.org](http://www.stoswaldsuk.org). Find us on:**



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