



St Oswald's
Hospice

Bereavement Support

Quality time for everyone

Bereavement is something that most of us experience at some time in our lives. We all react to it in different ways. The grief of bereavement is often accompanied by very strong and painful feelings. It may help to find out that what you are going through is a normal process, shared by many others.

Physical Problems

Many bereaved people feel strained and physically run down. Grief is time consuming and exhausting.

You may experience a variety of physical symptoms, including:

- **Breathlessness**
- **Exhaustion**
- **Loss of appetite or overeating**
- **Sleep problems**
- **Palpitations**
- **Loss of concentration and interest**

When we lose something we tend to search for it and searching is a common reaction to bereavement. You may think you see the person who has died walking down the street, or hear them calling your name. Such vivid experiences can feel very frightening, but they are not unusual. They are not a sign that you are 'going mad'.

Emotions

Even when death comes at the end of a long illness and it is expected, you are still likely to be left in a state of shock. Shock may leave you feeling completely numb and it may be a useful protection that gets you through the first few days. You might even find it hard to cry. Acknowledging your feelings and expressing them is something that shouldn't be avoided for long, it is part of the healing process.

You may experience some or all of the following;

- **Guilt** • **Panic** • **Anxiety** • **Anger (even with the dead person)** • **Despair**

All of these feelings and reactions may come and go in an unpredictable way during bereavement. If any of these symptoms persist it may be advisable to speak to your GP.

You may find it useful to think of bereavement as a wound, something from which you need time to recover. As the wound begins to heal, the intensity of these feelings is likely to fade.

Our Bereavement Service

St Oswald's Bereavement Service offers support to children, relatives and friends after the death of someone who has received care from the Hospice. Many people find it helpful to talk about their thoughts and feelings with someone who is not directly involved.

We can provide:

- Individual one to one support at St Oswald's or over the phone. We will support you for as long as you feel you need it.
- Group support held at St Oswald's, where you can share feelings and experiences with others who may be experiencing similar feelings.
- Remembrance Services four times each year.
- Bereavement support for children and information and advice regarding the needs of bereaved children.

Our bereavement care is aimed at helping those left behind, to cope and adapt to their loss.

All St Oswald's staff and volunteers observe complete confidentiality in respect of patients and their families in our care. Information will only be divulged to another person e.g. medical, nursing or other professional staff, as appropriate, who are directly concerned with their care.

Some Useful Tips

- Don't bottle up feelings.
- Express your emotions.
- Don't avoid talking about what has happened.
- Remember that you need time to sleep, rest and think.
- Avoid making major decisions too soon.
- Don't forget that children have similar feelings and need to share in the grief.
- Be gentle with yourself. If you have a bad day, put it behind you, as tomorrow is another day.

Useful Websites

CRUSE

Supporting you after the death of someone close.
www.cruse.org.uk

Compassionate Friends

Supporting families after a child dies.
www.compassionatefriends.org

Winston's Wish

Help for bereaved children and their families.
www.winstonswish.org.uk

Child Bereavement UK

Charity with information for young people who've been bereaved.
www.childbereavementuk.org

Please visit the bereavement section of our website for details of other agencies offering help, support and advice.

If you would like to talk about anything in this leaflet please contact Brenda, Beth or Sarah from the Bereavement Support Team on **0191 285 0063** ext **2008, 2009** or **2173**.

We are a registered charity and rely on voluntary donations and legacies to enable us to care for patients and families.



**St Oswald's
Hospice**

0191 285 0063 | enquiries@stoswaldsuk.org
www.stoswaldsuk.org

St Oswald's Hospice, Regent Avenue, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 1EE. Reg Charity No. 503386