

# Cruse Bereavement Care

## Grief Explained

### Information for friends and relatives

**Telephone 01502 722234  
(answer phone)**



### ***What is grief?***

When someone important to us dies we suffer a wide range of emotions. It is these reactions that are called grief.

Although sadness lies at the core of all grief, many other feelings may also be present such as desolation, despair, emptiness, loneliness, relief, anger, guilt, irritation and feeling thoroughly bad tempered.

### ***Physical feelings***

How do you respond to a death or a bereaved person will be very individual and personal. These are some of the things people often say when someone dies. They may help you to feel that you are not completely alone, or to understand what someone you know is going through.

### ***How long does grief last?***

There is no general answer, each person is unique. It may take a long time to rebuild a shattered world. Some will tell you that grief has no ending or is ever changing and moving, the firm foundation of their world has turned to quicksand.

After the build up of distress in the early months, on the whole, they will slowly emerge as the dawn of healing replaces the lonely darkness of grief.

### ***What is going on?***

The person who has never suffered a bereavement is highly unlikely to realise just how much thinking will be taking place inside the mind of someone who is grieving. Loss by death can shatter the way we view the world around us. Grieving people will be thinking deeply about the death itself. How did it happen? Why did it happen like that? Thoughts travel back into the past, shift rapidly into present problems, then fly off into an unknowable future.

There are so many thoughts occupying the mind of a newly bereaved person, little wonder that their ability to concentrate or remember is diminished. Bereaved people are often trying to work out for themselves the meaning and importance of their own existence.

Alongside the need to feel and the need to think there is the need to take action. After a major bereavement, a whole new life may have to be gradually created and new activities and relationships developed. Sometimes a simple action, such as placing a cup on a table or cutting the grass can trigger an intense feeling.

## What can help?

It is quite normal for a bereaved person to go through “mood swings” in a short time. One moment they may feel despair and need to be alone, yet later the same day be feeling able to tackle tasks and meet people.

Death cannot be controlled. Bereaved people often feel they have lost all control over what happens to them, on a day to day basis and for the future. Gradually they need to be encouraged to take control again and make choices about the things they want to do. The fact that they find this difficult and can keep dithering or changing their minds or saying “you decide” can be trying for those attempting to help them.

All this can be very confusing for friends and relatives who don't know how to react or what to say in their desire to lessen the hurt and suffering they see in the bereaved.

Don't be afraid to ask how you can help, and try not to be upset if any suggestions you make are spurned, they probably don't know what would be helpful either.

## How Cruse can help

Cruse can provide someone to talk to in complete confidentiality

All our counsellors are trained specifically in bereavement.

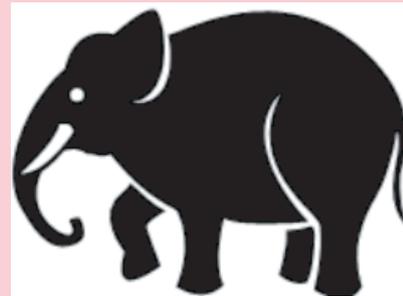
We will visit you in your own home

Our service is completely free

Each service lasts for an hour

How many sessions you have depends on you and your counsellor and you will be able to discuss with them at any time.

There is an elephant in the room.  
It is large and squatting, so it's hard to get round.  
Nonetheless, we squeeze by with a  
“How are you?” and “I'm fine!”  
And a thousand other forms of trivial chatter.  
We talk about the weather.  
We talk about work.  
We talk about everything else - except  
the elephant in the room.  
We all know it's there.  
We're thinking about the elephant as we talk.  
It is constantly on our minds, for, you see,  
it is a very big elephant.  
But we do not talk about the elephant in the room.  
“Oh please say her name ...”  
“Oh please, say 'Barbara' again”  
“Oh please, let us talk about the  
elephant in the room.”  
For if we talk about her death,  
perhaps we can talk about her life.  
Can I say 'Barbara' and not have to look away?  
For if I cannot, you are leaving me alone  
in a room  
with an elephant.



**Local Branch Details:**  
**North Suffolk &**  
**Great Yarmouth Branch**  
**PO Box 11, Wrentham, Beccles**  
**Suffolk NR34 7JU**

One to one support from our trained  
Bereavement Support Workers  
throughout the area

If you need our help please phone and  
leave a message on our answer phone.

**01502 722234**

One of our trained volunteers will call you  
back as soon as possible.