



# Helpline

Free. Confidential.

## Bereavement

INFORMATION, ADVICE AND COUNSELLING SERVICE

  **Printing Charity**  
  Welfare. Education. Heritage.

At some stage in our lives, we will all face the pain of **bereavement**. This leaflet will help provide information about the practical matters that need to be dealt with as well as provide some reassurance. You might find it difficult to open up and talk to people around you. Our **helpline service** is here to help, both with practical advice and emotional support to help with any of your worries or concerns.

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# Immediate tasks

When someone dies, there are lots of practical things to deal with, which can be stressful at a time of grief. You don't have to get through it alone. Be sure to ask friends or family around you to help so as not to feel overwhelmed.

**There are a number of people you need to contact in the first instance. They are:**

- **Family doctor**
- **Funeral director**
- **The deceased's employer and your own if you need time off work**
- **Close relatives**

After initial contacts, there will be other people who you will need to inform of a death to close accounts, payments, and cancel any details registered under the deceased's name.

- **Financial** - insurance companies, banks and building societies, mortgage provider, credit cards, store cards, pension provider
- **Government** - HMRC, Passport Office, Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA), Department for Work and Pensions, Child Benefit Office
- **Utilities** - Local Authority, landlord, utility providers, Royal Mail
- **Health care providers** - dentist, optician, and any others
- **Other** - clubs and committees, library, friends, and social groups

If you contact the Bereavement Register and Deceased Preference Service, they will be able to remove the deceased's name from most mailing lists.



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# The first five days

Within the first five days, there are immediate tasks which will need to be looked at to register a death.

You will need to go to the Registrar's Office in the area where the death occurred, unless it has been referred to the Coroner. A death is usually registered by a close family member. You will need to take certain information with you to see the registrar, so the process can be completed. This includes: Medical Certificate of Cause of Death, birth certificate, marriage certificate (if applicable), passport, and proof of address. You will also need to give details of the deceased's occupation and any state pensions or benefits they were receiving.

The registrar will give you the certificates and paperwork needed for the funeral. You can also purchase extra copies of the death certificate from them or, if needed later, you can order them online.

If the deceased has a will, this may be with a solicitor if not found at home with any personal papers. There will usually be one person nominated as an executor to sort out the deceased's affairs. The Probate Registry Office will be able to help if no will has been left.

Deciding on the details of the funeral is very personal and can take a bit of time to think through. It is best to check through any papers to see if funeral arrangements have already been made for the deceased. Many people may have prepaid funeral plans or insurance plans, which will cover funeral expenses. Costs can quickly add up so be sure to ask for an estimate of costs from the funeral director to keep an eye on any spending.



### Benefits and financial help

You may be entitled to financial help and benefits if you are a dependant of the deceased. This includes a one-off bereavement payment as well as a funeral expenses payment. Certain eligibility may apply. If you need advice on the help you may be entitled to, speak to one of our information specialists.

#### Further support and help for those who have been bereaved:

- **Cruse Bereavement Care** offers support, advice, and local services.
- **The National Association of Widows** offers support from other widows.
- **Winston's Wish** provides support for bereaved children.
- **Lesbian and Gay Bereavement Project Friend** offers advice and support to people bereaved by the death of a same-sex partner.
- **The Department for Work and Pensions** provides a guidance leaflet, *What to do after a death in England and Wales*.

**Don't forget, you can talk to one of our trained counsellors for confidential advice and support. Call our helpline on 0333 212 3534.**

### Bereaved children

Caring for a bereaved child whilst you are also going through the stages of grief can be difficult. There is no harm in asking others for help, whether that be for practical things like shopping or cooking or simply to have some time to yourself without children to look after.

It is a good idea to inform the school or college the bereaved child attends so they are aware of the situation. The school could contact Cruse Bereavement Care, which publishes a guide called: *When Someone Dies: How schools can help bereaved students*.

The funeral is a way of saying goodbye to a loved one and it can be helpful for children to be a part of this. Try to include them when arranging the mourning and let them take part in decisions. This allows them to know you are willing to talk about the subject, which can help them express their feelings. Excluding children may feel like the kind option but they will be more aware of the situation if involved.

You may instinctively want to hide your own feelings from children. However, allowing children to see you go through different emotions like crying can reassure them it is perfectly normal to do so.

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# The pattern of grief

It is important to look after yourself when you are mourning the loss of a loved one. Most people find it takes a while before they start to feel themselves again after losing someone close. There is no right or wrong way to grieve and everyone will do so in their own way. Don't feel that you need to live up to the expectations of anyone around you. Allow yourself to feel everything as it comes and do things at your own pace.

**Although bereavement is a totally personal experience, you may recognise a pattern of grieving which can occur for most people:**

## **Shock**

You might feel numb for the first few days after the passing of someone close. This may help you to deal with your initial emotions. Some people find it comforting to be able to see the body of the deceased in order to confirm the reality of their passing.

## **Pain**

The feeling of loss and yearning can be hard to get through once the initial feeling of shock has passed. Emotions can veer from a sense of loss to guilt or anger. You might find you experience physical symptoms such as nausea or not being able to sleep. Dreaming about being able to see the person you have lost isn't unlikely and such dreams can be unusually vivid. Sometimes it can be easier to express what you are feeling to someone independent rather than friends or family, who may also be grieving.

### **Depression**

Feelings of grief may lessen over time, but you may still find yourself feeling lonely or upset and wanting to withdraw from others. You might feel you want to shut yourself off and not be around other people but it is a good idea to try and get back into aspects of your daily life. Those closest around you will understand if you are quiet or distracted. It is also reasonable for you to suddenly feel grief at any point in time as you work out how to deal with your feelings. People may be uncertain of what to say to you, but you shouldn't see it as a lack of sympathy.

### **Acceptance**

There will come a time when you eventually find you can start looking forward again. You can start to remember the happy times you shared with the deceased and not just focus on the loss you feel. Finding new activities to join or reaching out to friends and family and spending more time with them can be a good way to channel your emotional energy. Healing from the loss of someone close takes time and carrying on with your life is a part of the process.



### **Problems**

Sometimes people can find themselves stuck in the process of grieving and feel they cannot find a way through. If you feel you are suffering with symptoms including sleeplessness or harmful thoughts towards yourself, it might be time to ask for help. Speak with your doctor to see if they can offer advice or call one of our counsellors who can help.

The Printing Charity's helpline provides confidential, practical, and emotional support 365 days a year, free to access whenever you need. The helpline gives you access to information and advice on areas including family and personal issues, personal finance, the workplace, and wellbeing.

**The following booklets are also available:**

**Childcare**

A practical guide to finding the right childcare for your family, the help available, and checklists for interviewing

**Dealing with Debt**

There is often more leeway than you think. This is a step-by-step guide to assessing your position, dealing with creditors, and creating a workable solution.

**Drinking**

Drinking may affect your job, family or friends or all three. Use the scorecard to assess drinking habits and find help if you or someone you know needs it.

**Elderly Relatives**

An elderly relative can be a source of concern. This booklet provides information and advice on managing accommodation, finances, and funding.

**Family Breakdown**

Advice on the decision to separate, the practical implications for now and the future

**To discuss these or any other issues in confidence, call The Printing Charity's Helpline to speak to a counsellor or an information and advice specialist.**

**Free, confidential helpline**

**0333 212 3534**

**Helpline** 

**[www.theprintingcharity.org.uk/helpline](http://www.theprintingcharity.org.uk/helpline)**