

Bereavement Care

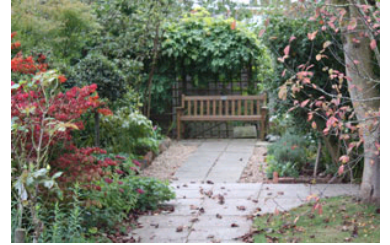


The death of a loved one can be a bewildering and devastating experience and may bring about very strong emotions. Sometimes these emotions are stronger than you would have expected if your loved one had been ill for some time. People grieve in different ways. Some seem to cope quite well initially, but find it more difficult later on. Some have more difficulties at the beginning.

Be gentle with yourself, whatever feelings and reactions you are experiencing are a natural part of the grieving process. They are not signs you are not coping. Grief is a very personal experience; there is no right or wrong way to feel. We are all different and deal with things in different ways.

At St. Wilfrid's we like to keep in touch with all those who have lost a loved one under the care of the hospice.

Support is available if you feel you might find it helpful to talk to someone outside of your family and friends. Counselling is available one-on-one, by telephone or in person, and in group settings. We also have Hospice Visitors who can talk to you on the telephone or visit you at home.



We also have times when you can come and meet other people in a similar situation to yourself.

Safe Haven is a safe, supportive place where people who have recently lost someone can come and share their experiences, or just listen, if that's what they would prefer. This can often help alleviate some of the feeling of isolation. People can contribute as much or as little as they feel comfortable. *Safe Haven* meets the first and third Monday of every month from 2pm to 3.30pm.

Open House is on the first Thursday of every month from 12noon until 2.00pm, where a buffet lunch is provided. This tends to be a larger more open gathering, but still safe and relaxed, where people are able to chat amongst themselves and exchange ideas, information and tips on coping strategies.

Coffee Morning is on the third Thursday of every month from 11am to 12.30pm. Coffee, Tea and Biscuits are provided. This self help group provides people a way of staying in touch with the hospice.

You may experience some or all of the following:

"I can't believe it's happened"

Even if expected, the death of a loved one can be a shock. You may feel empty, cold and unreal. It may leave you numb and dazed, it's hard to believe it's true. You may even see or hear the person, especially if they have been part of your life for a long time.

"I don't feel well"

Grief may be experienced physically, as exhaustion, lack of appetite or changes in your sleep pattern. You may feel tired and yet not be able to sleep.

"I think I'm going mad"

You may feel a range of emotions more strongly than you've felt before and you may feel that they seem overwhelming at times. You are not going mad but you may feel differently from usual. Grief is a very individual process. What is important is that you allow yourself time to grieve, in the way that feels right for you.

"I feel so alone"




People may seem to avoid you, often because they don't know what to say. You may put up a barrier because talking about your grief might make you cry and feel embarrassed. This can all feel very isolating. Family and friends may worry about speaking about the person you have lost for fear of upsetting you. It may be necessary for you to let them know if you want to talk about your loved one, and that you need their help and support.

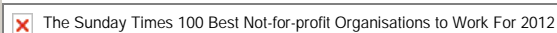
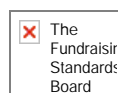
"Life has no purpose"

You may have no energy and feel very down. Everything may be an effort and you feel you can't cope. Grief may show itself in physical illness, anxiety and feelings of panic. This will ease in time. Try to concentrate on one day at a time. Don't give your self big goals that are difficult, concentrate on one day at a time.

"I feel so guilty"

Feeling guilty over something said or done is often part of grieving. You may feel irritable, restless or critical of yourself and others which can lead to feelings of despair. These are normal, natural feelings and you need not feel they are wrong

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