



# The Impact of Bereavement on Adults

## What is Bereavement?

Bereavement is a common, sad, deeply upsetting, traumatic experience and it usually happens when someone close to a person has died. Bereavement can have a traumatic effect on a person's life. Grief is the acute pain that accompanies loss. Feelings of sadness and loss can also accompany other losses, for example ill health or the end of an important relationship, when people can feel alone. Bereavement is a particularly vulnerable time in a person's life.

## What can be the effects on adults who experience bereavement?

People respond to grief in many different ways, and each person's experience is unique. However, there are several common signs to indicate grief, which might come and go, including:

- Feelings of shock and numbness.
- Overwhelming feelings of sadness.
- Constant crying.
- Tiredness and exhaustion.
- Feelings of anger. This might be towards the deceased person or the reason for the loss.
- Feelings of guilt.

## Stages of grief and Bereavement

The NHS states that experts generally agree that people go through four stages of bereavement or grief. These are:

1. Accepting that your loss is real.
2. Experiencing the pain of grief.
3. Adjusting to life without the person or thing you have lost.
4. Putting less emotional energy into grieving and putting it into something new.

Most people will go through all of the four stages, but not everyone will move necessarily smoothly from one stage to another. Grief and bereavement can sometime feel chaotic. However, in time, feelings will become less intense.

## Top tips to help with grief, loss or bereavement

- Talking about your feelings to family, friends or seeking professional support from a counsellor or support organisation might help (see list of support services below)
- Set small targets each day that can be easily achieved
- Search and download [relaxation and mindfulness apps](#), [online community apps](#) or [mental wellbeing audio guides](#)
- [Consider accessing peer support services](#)
- [Try to get plenty of sleep](#)
- Try not to use alcohol, drugs, gambling or smoking to relieve feelings of grief.
- Focus energy and time into positive thoughts and looking after yourself
- Try the [6 ways to feel happier](#), which are simple lifestyle changes to help you feel more in control and able to cope.
- Know that you are not alone and that there are people and organisations that can provide support.

## List of Support Services

[At A Loss: Provides a signposting directory for the bereaved](#)

[Beyond Words: Books, e-books and downloadable resources for people who find it easier to understand pictures than words, including people with learning difficulties](#)

[Cruse Bereavement Care: Provides support, information, guidance and helpline for those affected by bereavement](#)

[Dying Matters: support for those who have been bereaved. Includes a helpful leaflet called Being there.](#)

[Marie Curie: Bereavement Information](#)

[My Wishes: Information and resources for sorting out your digital legacy, including tutorials for people who want to put plans in place for their online accounts at the end of life.](#)

[NHS: Grief after bereavement or loss: Provides support and information about grief and loss](#)

[Samaritans: Provides 24-hour confidential emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair.](#)

[Shine A Light on Suicide: Support and resources if you are bereaved by suicide or concerned that someone you know may be thinking of suicide](#)

[Sue Ryder: Online Bereavement Support](#)



[Tell us Once: A free service that lets you report a death to most government organisations in one go](#)

[The Bereavement Register: By registering with this free service, the names and addresses of the person who has died are removed from mailing lists, stopping most advertising mail within six weeks](#)

[WAY \(Widowed and Young\): The only national charity in the UK for men and women aged 50 or under when their partner died](#)

[Wigan Council Bereavement Support Services: provides a range of bereavement information, guidance and onwards support to specialist organisations](#)