

Bereavement Support in the time of Coronavirus

Grieving is a normal response when someone you love, or someone who had a big impact on your life, dies. Even at the best of times, grief is a challenging and incredibly demanding process that can lead us to experience a wide range of emotions. Grief is undoubtedly "hard work"; it is commonly reported to be an effortful and exhausting process that can affect both your mental and physical health.

It is not therefore surprising, that the current Coronavirus outbreak is having a significant impact on everyone who is bereaved and grieving at this time; whether you are grieving directly due to the loss of someone with Coronavirus, whether you feel that the Coronavirus context impacted on the care of the person who has died or whether you were bereaved before March this year and had just started on your grief journey when lockdown started. In addition, many people are imagining what it would be like to lose their loved one in this context of lockdown and others are feeling that their loss is not as recognised as it might have been or has been made worse by social distancing measures that have served to increase their sense of isolation in a very real way.

Grieving can be a very lonely and isolating experience. Social distancing measures may mean that you are not able to be with family members and friends who would have usually supported you through this difficult time. It may mean that you are alone at home much more, possibly dwelling on difficult memories or spending more time with your sense of loss than you otherwise might. Alternatively, you may have moved in with family and friends during lockdown and now find that you have little opportunity to grieve privately as you might otherwise have done. If you were bereaved before Coronavirus, you may have been making good progress with your grief and just begun to engage more with the world outside, attend a support group etc and now those face to face social opportunities have been taken away and so grief has been interrupted, possibly leading to a strange sense of being in limbo.

Whatever your experience, please know that your grief will evolve and there are many people out there, irrespective of Coronavirus, who genuinely want to help you through your experience of grief.

At the hospice, the bereavement service is available to all adult relatives and loved ones of all patients who had been under the care of the hospice during their life and who had been resident in the Cambridge and East Cambridge area. Currently our service is open to adults only i.e. those aged 18 and above. You can access this service at any time after your bereavement simply by calling us on **01223 675770** or filling in the **self-referral form** at the bottom of this page and posting it back to us. If we are not immediately able to take your call, we will call you back, typically within 48 hours, to take your details. Currently, we are still offering assessment appointments and

ongoing support and therapy sessions. Whilst we look forward to a time when we can offer face-to-face outpatient appointments, for now we are offering sessions via telephone or video call, whichever you prefer.

If your loved one was not under the care of the hospice, or you would prefer not to access the hospice for bereavement support, there are many other organisations who would be able to offer you the support you need at this time. There is lots of information about grieving and grieving in the time of Coronavirus on their websites. There are also many resources for children and schools to access.

Please see below for details:-



CRUSE are a national charity that work with bereaved people. They work with adults and children. CRUSE are usually able to work with children from around age 5 but at the time of writing, they are only offering telephone support to young adults from around 14 years of age onwards. They have national and local helplines. The national helpline number is: **0808 8081677** and is accessible Monday-Friday 9.30-5pm (excluding bank holidays), with extended hours on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, when they are open until 8pm. Alternatively, you can email them on **helpline@cruse.org.uk** The local telephone number for CRUSE in Cambridge is: **01223 633536** available Monday to Friday 9:30-13:30. This local service can arrange further bereavement support sessions for you, which are currently taking place over the telephone. The CRUSE website can be found at: <https://www.cruse.org.uk/>



MIND have some useful web pages around experiences of grief and also about how family and friends can help someone who is grieving.

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/about-bereavement/>

They also offer a helpline that you can ring Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm (except bank holidays): **Infoline: 0300 123 3393**. You can also email, or write for further support: Email: info@mind.org.uk Text: 86463 Post: Mind Infoline, PO Box 75225, London, E15 9FS



WAY is a UK charity that offers a peer-to-peer support network for anyone who has been bereaved of their partner before the date of their 51st birthday – married or not, with or without children, whatever their sexual orientation. They charge an annual fee (£25 at the time of writing) and offer a 24-hour helpline and 'members only' resources.

<https://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk/>

NHS

The NHS has information pages on bereavement, which can also suggest things to do if you feel you need more support.

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/coping-with-bereavement/>

Supporting Children – during the Coronavirus outbreak



The BBC have lots of helpful videos to help children understand the Coronavirus situation and related content on helping parents talk to children about the situation. Follow the links below. You may need to scroll down and click on the 'Coronavirus' tab.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround#more-stories-2>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51734855>



The Early Learning experts at Save the Children have put together a brilliantly helpful webpage on keeping the kids entertained during lockdown.

<https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/what-we-do/coronavirus-information-advice/keeping-kids-entertained-during-lockdown#>

Supporting children through grief and other difficult emotions



As mentioned above, **CRUSE** are a national charity able to offer telephone support to young people – currently offering a service to those aged 14yrs and above.



STARS are a local charity supporting young people in Cambridgeshire facing grief and dealing with loss. They are not able to take referrals at present but hope to open to referrals in Autumn 2020. Their website has lots of useful information on how to support young people through grief.

<https://talktostars.org.uk/stars-statement-on-covid-19/>



Winston's Wish are a charity offering advice and guidance on supporting children through bereavement and Coronavirus. They offer information on topics including: telling a child that someone they know is seriously ill, telling a child that someone they love has died from Coronavirus or another condition, advising schools about how they can support bereaved students and ways for children to say goodbye if you cannot attend a funeral at this time of lockdown.

www.winstonswish.org



Child Bereavement UK are a charity that help children and young people (up to age 25), parents, and families, to rebuild their lives when a child grieves or when a child dies. They also provide training to professionals, equipping them to provide the best possible care to bereaved families. They offer a national helpline providing confidential support, information and guidance to families and professionals. Their helpline team is available to take calls and respond to emails Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm. Contact them on **0800 0288840** or email support@childbereavementuk.org

www.childbereavementuk.org

Older Children and Teenagers:



Barnardos had put together a fantastic Coronavirus hub for children and adults. This includes some helpful links and information on managing anxiety and other emotions, whether during lockdown or in normal time.

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/coronavirus-advice-hub>

An particularly helpful link takes you to **Coping Skills for Kids**, which offers advice from a child therapist on how to cope with difficult emotions at this time.



<https://copingskillsforkids.com/coping-with-coronavirus>

childline

ONLINE, ON THE PHONE, ANYTIME
childline.org.uk | 0800 1111

Childline have a fantastic website offering information and ideas on managing difficult emotions. They also have a Coronavirus specific page and you can email them through the website. They have a free helpline that is currently available every day between 9am and midnight: **0800 1111**.

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus/>

Support for Schools



The Psychology Department at the hospice run an education day for working with bereaved children in conjunction with Stars. This is not scheduled to happen again until the Autumn. However, it may be possible to arrange additional days before then. If you would like more information about this, please contact our Education Team education@arhc.org.uk 01223 675801.



CRUSE may be able to offer training and information sessions to school staff in the same way they are sometimes able to arrange for residential care homes.



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www.winstonswish.org



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