

Bereavement:

A guide for managers and colleagues



St Monica Trust

June 2024

Introduction



We know, from research into bereavement and people who work in care settings, that people who are able to validate their loss will experience greater growth from it. The ability and time to process loss and bereavement is important for you and your well-being. Our colleagues tell us that the relationships formed with residents and customers, and indeed with each other, are very close and we know that having support during grief is essential for all our roles.

A circular graphic with a dark, starry night sky background. A thin white crescent moon is positioned at the top center. The text "IT TAKES AS LONG AS IT TAKES, BE KIND TO YOURSELF" is centered in white, uppercase, serif font. Another thin white crescent moon is positioned at the bottom center.

IT TAKES AS
LONG AS IT
TAKES, BE
KIND TO
YOURSELF

@jeromelifecoach

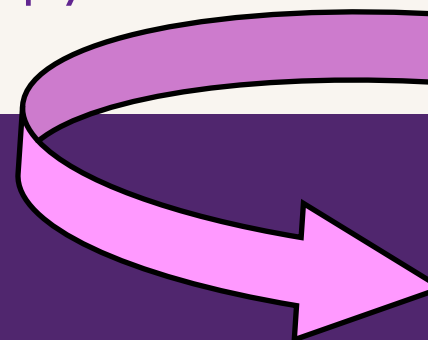
Dealing with grief



On the opposite side of the coin, not dealing with grief effectively will lead to burnout, compassion fatigue and loss of job satisfaction. In some of roles you will find yourself dealing with grief and grieving families, and if you don't acknowledge how you feel during these times, you can be putting yourself at a greater risk of stress and burnout.

At the Trust we know that peer and colleague support is often the greatest help that gets us through, along with the skills, knowledge and compassion of our teams of nurses and managers. The information in this booklet is designed to help support you and your colleagues' well-being in the event that a resident, customer, colleague or a loved one of a colleague dies.

Read on to find out about support available to help you.



Support for you



While you can never be truly prepared for loss and bereavement, having an understanding of the way you may be feeling will help you and others. This [Supporting Bereavement session on Learn](#) may be of help.

Wendy Hodsdon has created this video which takes a holistic approach to grief and loss. While explaining the stages of loss she also describes how 'closure' in real life is not always a reality and that grief is a personal and constant process.

Our [well-being website](#) has links

Support for you



Colleagues can access our **Employee Assistance Programme**, a free 24-hour confidential service run by **Canada Life**. Tel: 0208 068 0035 [wecare-cl.com](https://www.wecare-cl.com). Access code H30174 or download the WeCare app. **Click on the logo to find out more.**



You can speak to your line manager, [your local Pastoral Care Team](#), [HR Business Partner](#) or [Reward and Engagement Manager](#).



The Trust has over 40 **Mental Health First Aiders** across our homes and villages? This means you should never suffer in silence. We can help to signpost you to support and help to ease your worries.

ks to a whole host of resources

Support for you



Able Futures A government funded scheme which provides support for mental health for a nine month period.



At a loss offers a national signposting service to help bereaved people find local, specialist and national support.



Bamestream provides bereavement support for colleagues who are Black, Asian or other minority ethnic.



Child Bereavement UK helps children, young people, parents and families to rebuild their lives when a child grieves or when a child dies.

Our **well-being website** has links

Support for you



Cruse provides support, advice and information to children, young people and adults when someone dies.



Dying Matters Working to create an open culture that talks about death, dying and bereavement.



MIND provides information on bereavement, where to go for support, and suggestions for helping yourself and others through grief.



The Good Grief Trust Everyone at The Good Grief Trust has lost someone they love, so they want to help you find the support you need as quickly as possible.

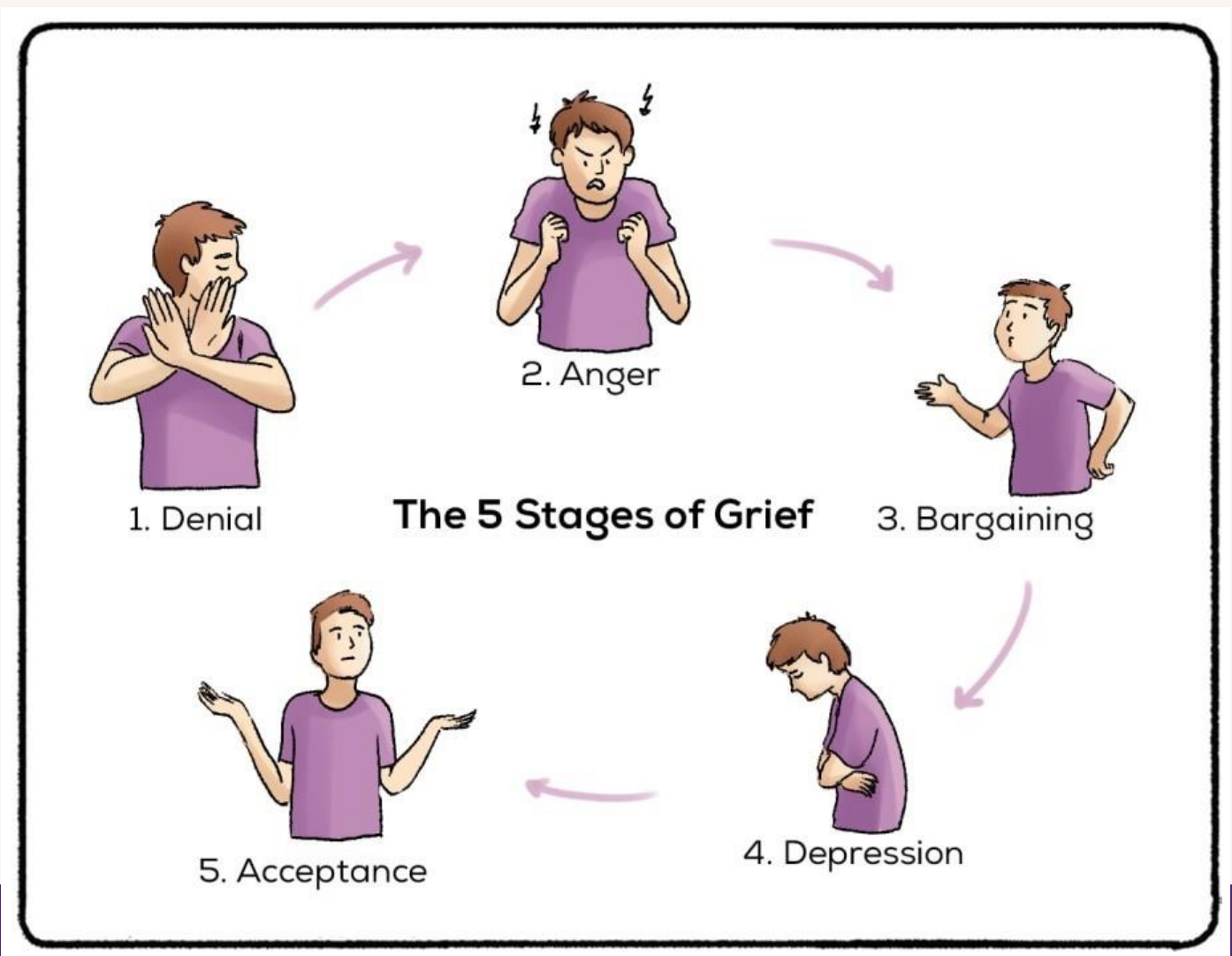
ks to a whole host of resources

Stages of grief



The way we experience grief is unique to us as individuals. It's important you don't judge yourself or others for the way grief is being handled.

It may help you to understand the five stages of grief commonly referred to, which are set out below.



Stages of grief

You may not necessarily go through them in this order, but understanding the stages will better equip us to cope with loss or bereavement.

This 4 minute video may help you to understand the 5 stages of grief better.

Helping with grief



When you're helping people with their bereavement, here are some important things to remember:

1. The physical context of communication is important: Try and sit on the same level as the person and at a comfortable distance. Maintain good eye contact .

2. Does the person want to talk? They may not be in the mood. If you're not sure, ask and don't be offended if they don't want to at the moment.

3. Listen and show you are listening: Think carefully about what the person is saying. Don't interrupt. Try not to anticipate what the person is going to say.

4. How can you encourage the person to talk?

Simple things like nodding or phrases such as, "yes I see" or, "tell me more" can help things keep going along if someone is feeling stressed. You can also repeat some of the words you've heard or paraphrase back what the person has said to you - partly to check you've got it right and partly to show that you are listening.

Helping with grief



5. Respecting silences and non-verbal communication:

If someone stops talking it may be that they are thinking of something painful. Wait with them and don't rush them.

Don't be afraid to say nothing but stay close - maybe put an arm around the person if it's something they find comforting.

6. Describing your own feelings: It's OK to say things like, "I find this very difficult to talk about" or, "I'm not very good at talking about..." - describing your emotions is valuable.

7. Making sure you have understood: Misunderstandings can happen if you make assumptions. You can ask questions to check that you have understood.

8. Avoiding giving advice too early: Ideally, don't give advice unless it's asked for, if you give advice too early it can stop the conversation.

9. The importance of encouraging reminiscence:

Many people want to share reminiscences whether they are young or old. It may also help to remember how they have coped with previous set backs and understand how they can draw on their previous coping abilities.

Helping with grief



And here our very own Deirdre Brunton shares some tender words about supporting colleagues at work when it comes to bereavement, loss and grief.

Our [well-being website](#) has link



**"NO ONE EVER TOLD
ME THAT GRIEF FELT
SO LIKE FEAR" - C.S.
LEWIS**

"I SAT WITH MY ANGER
LONG ENOUGH UNTIL
SHE TOLD ME HER REAL
NAME WAS GRIEF."



— C.S. LEWIS