

# Bereavement:

A guide for managers and colleagues



St Monica Trust

April 2025

# 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.



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

@jeromelifecoach

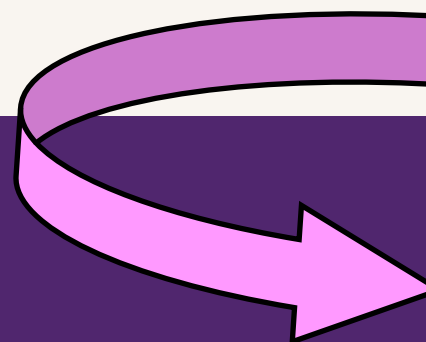
# Dealing with grief



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.

This short film focuses on how care homes support their staff after the death of a resident and how that in turn enables staff to cope better with the loss.

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://wecare-cl.com). Access code H30174 or download the WeCare app. **Click on the logo to find out more.**

Access code: H30174



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



The Trust has a team of **[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.

***[www.able-futures.co.uk](http://www.able-futures.co.uk)***



**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 link

# 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.
- 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.

# Helping with grief



**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.

**10. The value of humour:**

Humour serves an important function in our way of coping with major threats and fears-it allows us to rid ourselves of intense feelings whilst putting things into perspective. Humour is one of the ways that humans deal with things that at first seem impossible to deal with.

If someone wants to use humour to help them cope then you should encourage this but avoid trying to cheer them up with a supply of your own jokes.

# What to do when a person dies



Approaching death is different for every individual and can be a stressful time for families and carers. However, there are often physical and emotional changes which may indicate that life may be coming to an end.

It is important to know there is support and advice available for you, from your House Lead, Care workers, Registered Nurse, GP, and Pastoral Care Coordinator. All members of the team at St Monica Trust are committed to providing the unique support you require, at this difficult time.

Please refer to pages 4 to 7 of this guide for other support available to you.

# Local Hospices



We are closely affiliated with our colleagues at local hospices, who may visit the unit to be involved in advising on the care your loved one is receiving. For some people, getting information about what to expect is important. It helps them to prepare and plan.

Here are our Hospice links:



[St Peter's Hospice](#): Cote Lane, Westbury Fields and Monica Wills House



[Dorothy House Hospice Care](#): The Chocolate Quarter:



[Weston Hospicecare](#): Sandford Station



# Registering a death

## How to register a death



To make an appointment to register a death you will need to have had confirmation from the doctor that the relevant paperwork has been completed and forwarded electronically to your local register office.

You can find your local register office here: [Find a register office - GOV.UK](#)

If you have not heard from the doctor, please contact them in the first instance. When you have received confirmation from the doctor, please call the Registrar's Office to book an appointment. The death must be registered within five days with your local council registrations office.

## What you will need to register a death

To register a death, the Registration Service will need the Medical Certificate of Cause of Death which will be forwarded directly to you from the doctor's surgery.

The surgery should advise you when the paperwork has been completed. If a death has been reported to the coroner, they will need documents from the surgery before they can register the death.

# Registering a death



## **To register the death, your will be asked for:**

- Date and place of death.
- Full name, date and place of birth, last occupation, and usual address of the deceased person
- Whether the deceased person received any pension or benefits
- If the deceased person was married or widowed, they will need to know the full name and last occupation of their spouse. They will also need to know the date of birth of their surviving spouse.

Once the registration is complete the registrar will produce the form for the burial or cremation unless the Coroner has already issued one. This will be forwarded directly to the cemetery or crematorium and can also be sent to your funeral director if you would like.

## **Who should register a death?**

Most deaths are registered by a relative of the deceased.

If the death occurred in a care home and there are no relatives available, they would normally allow one of the following people to register the death:

- Someone who was present at the death.
- The occupier or manager of the premises where the person died.
- The person making arrangements with the funeral directors.
- The person who found the deceased's body
- The person in charge of the deceased's body

# Useful information



 HM Government

## Tell Us Once

Tell Us Once is a service that lets you report a death to most government organisations in one go such as:

- HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Passport Office
- Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA)
- The local council

<https://www.gov.uk/after-a-death/organisations-you-need-to-contact-and-tell-us-once>

## Guide to local Funeral Directors



[Find a local funeral director in the UK | localfuneral.co.uk](https://localfuneral.co.uk)

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

# A final word

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

s to a whole host of resources