

Bereavement

Bereavement is the experience of losing someone important to us. It is characterised by grief, which is the process and the range of emotions we go through as we gradually adjust to the loss.

Losing someone important to us can be emotionally devastating - whether that be a partner, family member, friend or pet. It is natural to go through a range of physical and emotional processes as we gradually come to terms with the loss.

Bereavement affects everyone in different ways, and it is possible to experience any range of emotions. There is no right or wrong way to feel. Feelings of grief can also happen because of other types of loss or changes in circumstances, for example:

- the end of a relationship
- the loss of a job
- moving away to a new location
- a decline in the physical or mental health of someone we care about.

There is no time limit on grief and this varies hugely person to person. The time spent in a period of bereavement will be different for everybody and depends on factors such as the type of relationship, the strength of attachment or intimacy to the person who died, the situation surrounding their death, and the amount of time spent anticipating the death.

Some of the most common symptoms include:

- shock and numbness – this is usually the first reaction to loss, and people often talk about "being in a daze"
- overwhelming sadness, with lots of crying
- tiredness or exhaustion
- anger – towards the person you've lost or the reason for your loss
- guilt – for example, guilt about feeling angry, about something you said or did not say, or not being able to stop your loved one dying

These feelings may not be there all the time and powerful feelings may appear unexpectedly. It's not always easy to recognise when bereavement, grief or loss are the reason you're acting or feeling differently.

Resources:

On the wings of grief – Bereavement Journal

How can I cope with Bereavement?

<https://www.sueryder.org/how-we-can-help/someone-close-to-me-has-died/advice-and-support/how-can-i-cope-with-bereavement>

Anniversaries and reminders when you are bereaved

<https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/about-grief/anniversaries-and-reminders-when-you-are-bereaved>