Children's grief



Children's understanding of grief and their reactions will depend on their age.

- A very young child **might not understand** that death is permanent.
- An older child or teenager **may use denial** to help them cope.
- Children may seem to **dip in and out of grief** – this doesn't mean they don't care.

Supporting a child or young person

- Tell them what has happened using **clear language**. Check their understanding, and let them talk and ask questions.
- Reassure them that they are **still loved**.
- **It's OK** to let them see that you're sad too.
- **Let them join in** with funerals and memorials, but be led by them.
- Talk to their school and make sure **other adults** involved in their care know what has happened.

"Children experience grief differently."

Cruse Bereavement Care

Cruse Bereavement Care offers support, advice and information to children, young people and adults when someone dies. We work to enhance society's care of bereaved people and we offer a range of services provided by trained volunteers.

Visit our website at www.cruse.org.uk

Email us at helpline@cruse.org.uk

Telephone our national freephone helpline 0808 808 1677

For more information on children and grief www.cruse.org.uk/children
Or see our website for young people www.hopeagain.org.uk.

Cruse Bereavement Care,
PO Box 800, Richmond, Surrey TW9 1RG

Royal Patron: Her Majesty The Queen

Registered charity no. 208078
A company limited by guarantee 00638709
Registered office: Unit 0.1, One Victoria Villas, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 2GW



Cruse Bereavement Care

Understanding bereavement

After someone dies

The death of someone close can be one of the hardest things we have to deal with.

There is no normal or 'right' way to grieve. How you react will depend on many things – who died and how, age and experience, personality and culture or religion.

Over time feelings usually become less intense, but you can't predict when it will happen, or force it to come sooner. There's no set timetable for starting to feel better. But eventually most people feel able to cope with their lives, whilst remembering those who have died.

Cruse can help

This leaflet gives some information about bereavement, and some advice that may help you look after yourself or a child in your care.

If as time goes on you find that you are struggling to cope, you can contact Cruse Bereavement Care for more support.

Our Freephone helpline number

0808 808 1677

You can find out more about our services on our website **www.cruse.org.uk**

What you may feel

There are no set stages or phases of grief which everyone goes through. But some feelings are very common.

- In the early days you may feel **shocked and numb,** or you may feel nothing at all.
- The **pain can be overwhelming**, and you may experience waves of intense feelings or mood swings. It's common to find yourself going over and over events.
- You may find yourself **searching for the person who has died**. It's normal to see the person, feel their presence or talk to them.
- You may **feel guilty** about things which happened before the death, or about how you feel now.
- You may **feel very angry** with yourself or others, or with the person who has died.
- You may have **trouble sleeping** or need to sleep more than usual. You may feel sick or panicky.
- As time goes on you may have strong feelings of **longing, sadness, loneliness** and sometimes hopelessness and fear about the future.

"Everyone experiences grief differently, and there is no timeline for grief."

Looking after yourself



It's important that you take care of yourself following a bereavement.

Treat yourself gently

Take one day at a time and give yourself permission to grieve. Don't feel guilty or weak if you're struggling to cope, or need help.

Talk to someone

Talking can be really helpful. Often family or friends can help. You might also be able to talk to someone in your community, or to a faith or spiritual leader. Talk to your GP if your health is suffering.

Diet and sleep

It's easier said than done, but try to eat properly and get enough rest (even if you can't sleep). People who use drugs and alcohol usually find any relief is only temporary.

Routine

Sometimes it helps to develop a new routine of eating, sleeping and connecting with others.

Exercise

Even a short walk to get some fresh air can help.