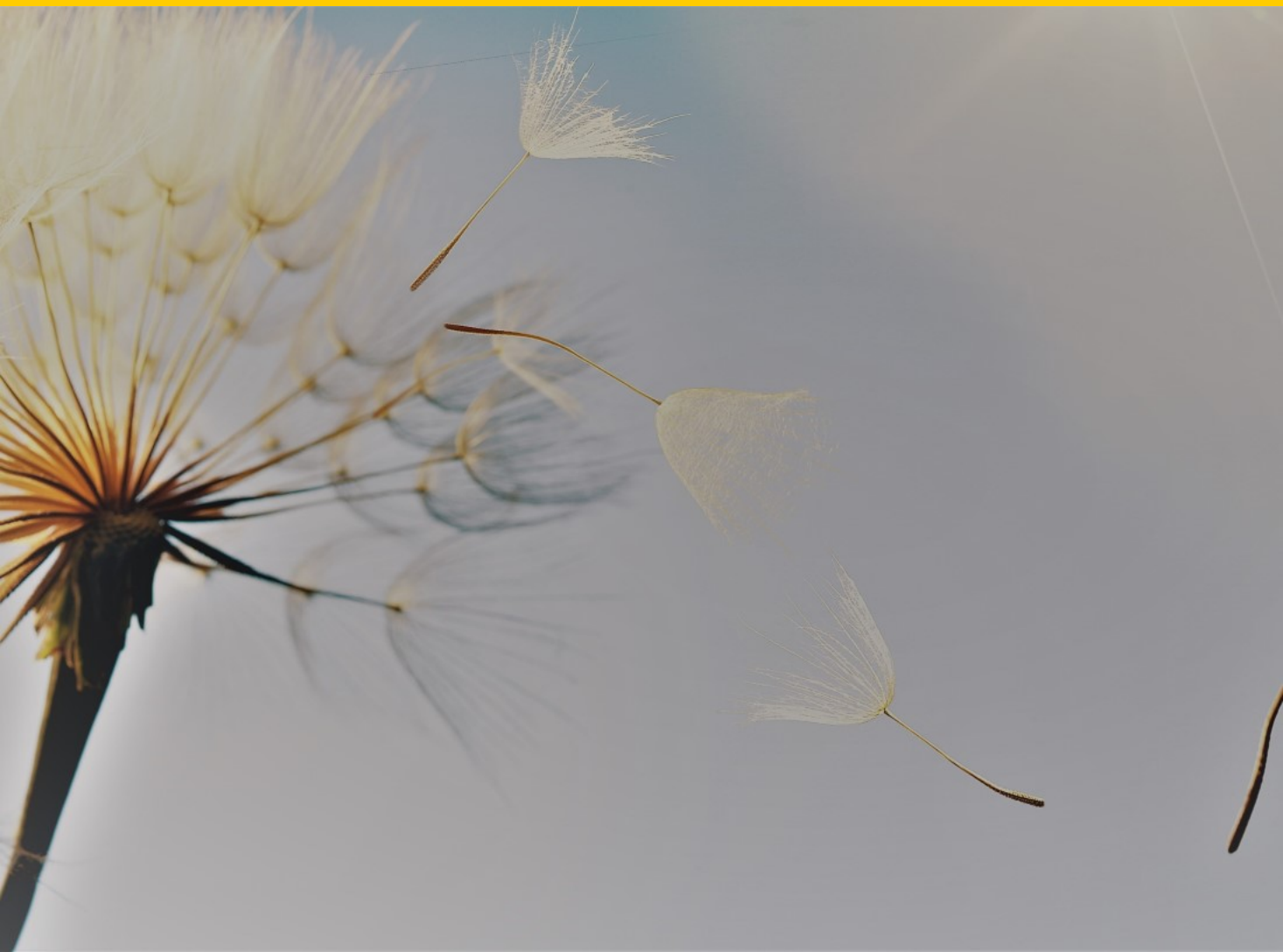


Bereavement Services

Information and guidance



East London
NHS Foundation Trust





Bereavement

Most people will experience bereavement at some time in their life. Everyone reacts to loss in their own way. Grief can be very painful and may give rise to feelings and thoughts that you don't expect. The death of someone close can sometimes seem like the most painful thing that has ever happened to you. It can feel bewildering and perhaps frightening.

Grief is a natural response to loss. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Most people will experience similar feelings of shock, disbelief, perhaps numbness, through to periods of utter confusion, pain and questioning.

You may find the information within this booklet helpful to cope with your loss, giving you information and advice on the practical issues you have to face as well as outline the support options for you.

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Facing the future



Coronavirus



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Looking after yourself



Practical support, advice and information



Remember Grief affects everyone in a different way

Sometimes you may feel very overwhelmed and at other times more in control and able to get on with your day to day activities. Grieving is not usually a smooth process; it takes time to adjust gradually to life without the person who has died.



Feelings and Thoughts

Even if you know someone is going to die, it is still a shock when it actually happens, and you may have trouble believing they won't be coming back. It may take some time for you to make an emotional adjustment to the knowledge that the person has died.

Grief can bring powerful and unexpected feelings and thoughts, and you may feel overwhelmed at times. It is not unusual to feel angry - anger with the person who has died, anger with the loneliness you feel, anger at the world or with your faith. Feelings of guilt and regret are common too. These feelings usually lessen over time. This is part of the usual grieving process.

Grief can be very tiring, so it is important that you are gentle with yourself, and don't expect to be as organised as you usually are. You may be tempted to make big changes in your life. Most people find that this is not the best time to do so - what seems right now may not feel right in a few months.

Grief is a natural reaction

The death of someone close to you can feel bewildering and perhaps frightening.

How you feel is understandable

Most people will experience similar feelings, initial shock, disbelief, numbness, pain and confusion

Grieving takes time

Grieving is not usually a smooth process, it takes time to adjust gradually to live without the person who has died. There is no right way or wrong way to grieve.

How can bereavement support help?

Loss is very personal, no two people experience loss in the same way. Many people find it helps to talk to someone who is not part of their family or friends.

How long will I need support?

We have a number of services available to you including: counselling, support and advice. We will work with you to find the support that works for you.

How much does it cost?

This service is free

Facing the Future

When you lose someone you love, life cannot be the same again, it has changed irrevocably. Things may even feel so bad that you can't see any prospect of them getting better. Grieving takes time - time to adjust to a different life without that person, and time to learn to lead a different life.

Although you won't forget the person you loved, with time you can find a way of holding onto your memories of them while finding hope in the future without them.





Talking to someone outside of your family and friends may help

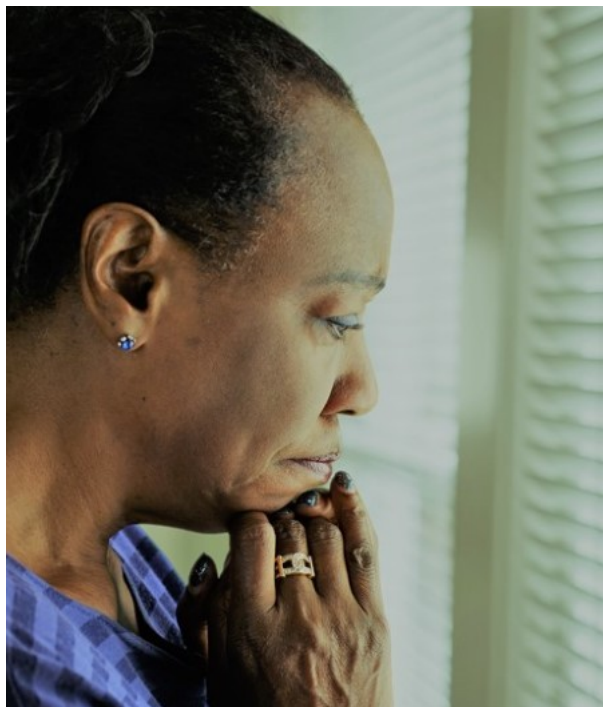
Culture and bereavement

Many people experience grief and a sense of loss after the death of a loved one. But the ways in which they experience and express these feelings may differ across cultures. Culture is the mix of beliefs, values, behaviours, traditions, and rituals that members of a cultural group share. Each culture has its own rituals that influence the expression of grief. Carrying out these practices offers a sense of stability and security. Rituals can also help people who are dying and bring comfort to the loved ones who are preparing for their loss.

Coronavirus and loss

If someone you know has died of coronavirus or complications resulting from the virus, a number of things may be particularly hard for you and your family and friends to deal with. Social Isolation may have meant that you have not had an opportunity to spend time with your loved one or to say goodbye in person.

Your family member may have become unwell and the illness progressed very quickly, which can lead to feelings of shock and disbelief. If you were not able to say goodbye to your loved one, it may be difficult to accept the reality of a bereavement. This can amplify any feelings of angst, guilt and distress.



How you can help yourself

Talking things through with friends and family can be very comforting. This can be done remotely if you or they are isolating. If you are feeling very distressed, share your feelings with someone you trust. If feelings persist you can contact your GP. You can also contact our bereavement services to get support. See page 12.



How you can help another person

Try to stay in contact with bereaved friends and family. Let them talk about how they are feeling and about the person who has died – talking can be one of the most helpful things after someone dies. Let them know you are there for them.



Loss and grief

During the global coronavirus pandemic we are facing a tragic loss of life, often under very difficult circumstances. Bereaved people may have to deal with increased trauma, and may be cut off from some of their usual support network. We are often looking for answers and right now we cannot find all the answers.



What Support is Available

This is a distressing time to be grieving and isolated, but we are here to help you.

Being bereaved can be one of the most lonely experiences you or someone you love may go through. Talking, and being with friends and family, can be one of the most helpful ways to cope after someone close to us dies.

This isolation can make feelings of loneliness and grief much more intense. It could mean having to stay by themselves in the same house you shared with the person who has died, bringing up painful reminders at every turn. You might be isolated together with your family, and although this at times may be a support, at other times tensions and resentments can be magnified making it difficult to help each other. The impact of dealing with a bereavement, compounded with feelings of worry about external situations can mean that feelings of grief aren't fully expressed.

We have a range of support services you may find helpful at this time.

One to One Counselling

We offer one to one counselling for up to 6 sessions. We are offering this service over the phone or via online video or face to face.

Initial contact and support

You may not feel ready to enter into a formal counselling programme, so we can offer you an 'Early Bereavement' session with a therapist to support you during this crisis

Practical support and information

You may need some support with the practical issues you are facing: how to get a death certificate; arrange a funeral; deal with probate issues or support with finances.

Wrap around support

If you require additional support or guidance you can contact the Connecting Communities service in Tower Hamlets and the Newham Bereavement service in Newham to ask about other support services you can access.



How to make a referral

There are a number of local services you can refer to if you are looking for Counselling, Bereavement counselling, advice and information or support services.

Please refer to the links overleaf, if you are having any difficulty then contact Mind in Tower Hamlets and Newham and our Connecting Communities team will ensure that you access the right support at the right time.

Alongside these services you will have access to a wide range of online resources, access to community groups and activities as well as access to Mindfulness and relaxations resources.

For information on Hackney go to next page



[Click here to access our advice and counselling services](#)




[Click here for the Newham Bereavement Service](#)



[Click here to access the Tower Hamlets Talking Therapy service](#)

[Newham Talking Therapies](#)

[Click here to access the Newham Talking Therapy Service](#)



How to make a referral - continued

Bereavement Services within Hackney are primarily delivered by City and Hackney Talking Therapies and St Joseph's Hospice. Mind in City, Hackney and Waltham Forest can support you to access the right service at the right time as well as offer you general wellbeing support, advice and guidance.

Click on the links overleaf to find our more.



[Click here to access our wellbeing support, advice and guidance](#)



[Click here for Talk Changes City and Hackney IAPT](#)



[Click here to access the St Josephs Hospice Service](#)



Looking after yourself



Look after yourself and get rest. Do try and get some fresh air or sunlight each day - even opening a window can help. If you are allowed, go for a walk or run, or do some exercise in your home. Try to keep to a regular routine of getting up, getting dressed and eating meals at the usual time, whether you are on your own or part of a family group.

You may find you have days when you have more energy and the grief isn't as consuming - this is normal. Some people can feel guilty when this happens, but there is no need. It is all a normal part of grieving. Please don't feel guilty or angry with yourself.



It is very common to see, hear or feel the presence of someone who has died so don't feel worried if this happens. This can be more common in the case of traumatic bereavement, and if someone is isolated in a location where they saw the person die, or where they are constantly reminded of their illness.

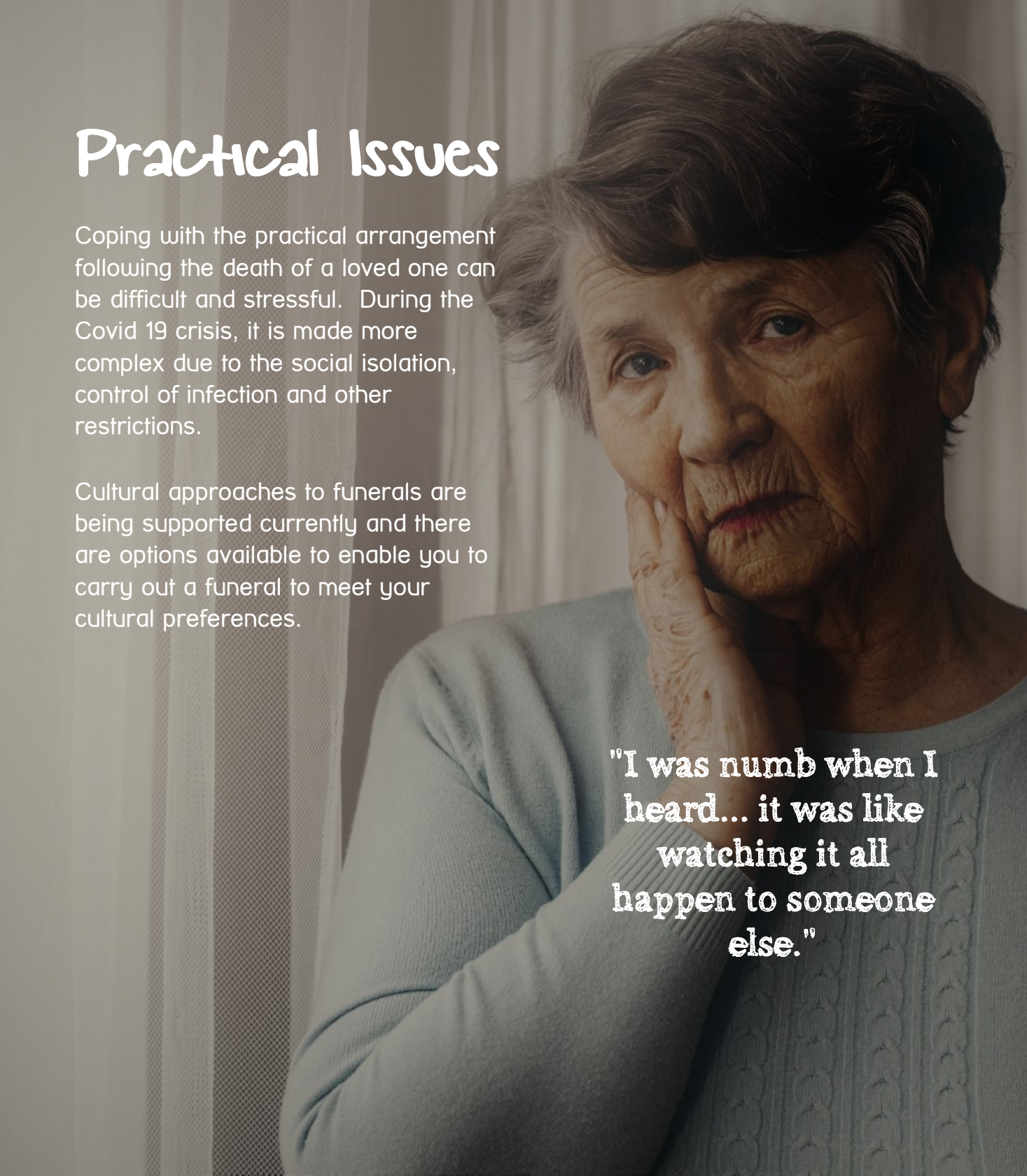
"What helped was talking, exercise and healthy eating."



Practical Issues

Coping with the practical arrangement following the death of a loved one can be difficult and stressful. During the Covid 19 crisis, it is made more complex due to the social isolation, control of infection and other restrictions.

Cultural approaches to funerals are being supported currently and there are options available to enable you to carry out a funeral to meet your cultural preferences.



"I was numb when I heard... it was like watching it all happen to someone else."

Dealing with Funeral Arrangement

Following the death of a loved one, managing funeral arrangements can be difficult and stressful, this is compounded by the current health crisis. As a result of the pandemic, the guidelines are that funerals should continue as normally as possible. However, families are being asked to restrict attendance to 'close family members' to reduce the risk of spreading coronavirus to attendees and staff involved in the ceremony. It is no longer appropriate to hold a gathering after the ceremony at any venue, including the family home.

Also, crematoriums may have their own guidance based on their facilities and this will need to be considered when arranging a funeral. They may also provide online broadcasting so mourners can watch the service without attending in person.

When arranging a funeral, you must consider the wider guidelines in place at the moment, including social distancing, good hand hygiene, avoiding physical contact and to be particularly mindful of those in at-risk groups (such as those over 70).

There are guidelines for arranging funerals with regard to cultural needs and respecting individuals religious ceremonies following the death of your loved ones.



Registering a Death

If a person has died in the community, your registered GP practice can be contacted to report and verify the death. The registered GP practice will arrange for a completion of death certificate to be sent electronically directly to the registrar and/or report the death to the coroner.

Deaths should normally be registered within five working days (unless a coroner is investigating the circumstances) by making an online application. Before you can register a death, you must have a Medical Cause of Death Certificate (MCCD) from the doctor. Your GP surgery, hospital or hospice will have already sent a copy of the MCCD along with your details, which the registration service will use to contact you to complete the registration. After the registration entry is complete, the registrar will email a certificate for burial or cremation to the funeral director.

Check with your local authority as each council may have its own procedures. The doctor who signs the medical cause of death certificate should be able to advise you of next steps.

Information for families and carers in the community

Information is available to support families and carers in the community.

[Click here to find out more.](#)



Information for families and carers in hospital

Information is available for families and carers in hospital

[Click here for further information](#)



Contact your local council

For more information about how to obtain the certificate contact your council on the website below.

[Click here for more information](#)



Contact your local bereavement services

We are working together with the East London Foundation Trust, Newham Council and St Joseph's Hospice to ensure that you have access to bereavement counselling and support. See page 12-15 for links to local services

Financial Support

Some people may experience difficulty in managing the cost of the funeral. You may be able to apply for support to help pay for a funeral you are arranging via a social fund funeral payment. Details here <https://www.gov.uk/funeral-payments>

The Children's Funeral Fund can also help to pay towards some of the funeral costs for a child under the age of 18 years or a stillborn after the 24th week of pregnancy. <https://www.gov.uk/child-funeral-costs>

"The financial burden families face after a sudden and unexpected death can increase the stress they are under"

You may be able to apply for the following benefits: Bereavement Support Payment and or Guardian Allowance

Following the death of a spouse your income may change. If you get extra money from pensions, annuities, benefits or inheritance the amount of tax you pay may go up. It may be less if your income level has been reduced. This may affect your benefit entitlement and income tax on some of your benefits as well as extra pension payments. You may be eligible to make new claims for some benefits.



Benefits you may be eligible for

There may be a number of benefits you are eligible for following the death of a loved one. Visit the Government Site to find out more about your rights or refer yourself to our Advice workers who can support you.

[Find out more details here](#)



Citizens Advice

Visit the Citizen Advice website for more information and guidance on your entitlement for financial support following a bereavement.

[Citizens Advice Website](#)



**citizens
advice**

Crisis information



TOWER HAMLETS CRISIS HELPLINE - 24 HOURS MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT



0800 073 0003



NEWHAM CRISIS HELP LINE - MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS SUPPORT



0800 073 0056



HACKNEY CRISIS HELP LINE - MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS SUPPORT



0800 073 0006



THE SAMARITANS



YOU CAN CALL ANYTIME ON **116 123** OR CLICK ON LINK FOR WEBSITE



MIND



CLICK ON LINK FOR INFORMATION ABOUT MANAGING A CRISIS



CRUSE BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT



CLICK ON MOUSE FOR WEBSITE



Taking care of yourself

It is important that you take care of yourself following a bereavement. One of the most helpful things is to talk about the person who has died and your relationship with them. Who you talk to will depend on you. It may be your family, friends, a faith/spiritual adviser, your GP or a support organisation.



in Tower Hamlets and Newham

www.mithn.org.uk



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