

Introduction

This guide is intended for anyone in South Gloucestershire, to signpost you to help and support if you have been bereaved.

It focuses on support to help you emotionally, since bereavement is one of the things that can happen in anyone's life which could affect your mental wellbeing.

For information to promote and manage your mental health and wellbeing in general, South Gloucestershire Council has produced a guide you can download or read online. Please go to www.southglos.gov.uk/mh for help and contact details of where to go for support.

Losing someone close to you

The death of someone close can seem like the most painful thing that has happened to you. It can feel bewildering and frightening. Grief is a natural reaction to loss. There is no right or wrong way to grieve.

Most people will experience similar sorts of feelings: the initial shock and disbelief, perhaps numbness and periods of confusion, intense pain and questioning. There may be anger, guilt, regrets and the sense of being alone. Sometimes you may feel overwhelmed and at other times more in control and able to get on with day to day activities. Adjusting to life without the person takes time.

Even if you know someone is going to die, it is still a shock when it actually happens and you may have trouble coming to terms with the reality that they won't be coming back.

Grief can bring up powerful and unexpected feelings and thoughts. It is not unusual to feel angry – anger with the person who has died, anger at the loneliness you feel, or anger at the world. This is a usual part of the grieving process.

You may find it difficult to concentrate. Grief can be very tiring, so it is important that you look after yourself. It is not unusual to experience mood swings. Although you may not feel like eating it is important not to neglect your health and wellbeing.

Moving on

When you lose someone you love, things can feel so bad that you can't see any prospect of them getting better. Grieving takes time – time to learn to lead a different kind of life. Your GP can help you with the grieving process and signpost you to agencies who can help you long term.

There is a lot of help and support available both nationally and locally.

National support available

Samaritans

If you feel things are too difficult and you need to talk to someone immediately, the Samaritans offer 24 hour helpline support every day of the year for anyone in distress including those who are feeling suicidal. Tel: 08457 90 90 90

Go to www.samaritans.org or email: helpline@cruse.org.uk

The Samaritans Bristol and District Area Tel: 0117 926 4045. 9a St James Barton, Bristol, BS1 3LT

Cruse Bereavement Care

Provides one-to-one and other support to the bereaved, organised through local branches (find your local branch number on the Cruse website).

If someone you know has died and you need to talk, call: 0844 477 9400

Face-to-face and group support is delivered by trained bereavement support volunteers:

www.cruse.org.uk.

There is also [information](#), [publications](#) and [support for children](#). Helpline: 0844 477 9400 Mon - Fri 0930-1700.

United Kingdom Young Person's helpline: 0808 808 16774

NHS

The NHS also provide helpful support and information on their webpage about grief after caring for someone you love.

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/bereavement/Pages/coping-with-bereavement.aspx>

Macmillan Cancer Support

Tel: 0808 808 0000

Mon- Fri 0900-2100

Web: www.macmillan.org.uk

Information and support for anyone affected by cancer whether they have been diagnosed themselves or are a family member, carer or friend.

LGBT Bereavement Support

Web: www.londonfriend.org.uk

Counselling and support for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people and their friends and families.

Way Foundation (Widowed And Young)

Tel: 0300 012 4929

Web: www.wayfoundation.org.uk

<https://www.widowedandyoung.org.uk/bereavement-support>

Provides a self-help network across the UK to those who are bereaved through losing their partner/spouse when aged 50 or under, together with their children.

Way Up

Email: info@way-up.co.uk

Tel: www.way-up.co.uk

An organisation that offers help for people widowed in their 50's and 60's.

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide

Tel: 0844 561 6855 Lines are open 0900-2100 every day

Web: www.uk-sobs.org.uk

A self-help organisation which exists to meet the needs of those bereaved by the suicide of a family member or anyone close to them. If you cannot find what you want on the website call: 0800 800 4361

Bereavement Advice Centre

See www.bereavementadvice.org or call: 0800 634 9494 for more information.

Offers a national telephone helpline and web resources providing practical information, advice and signposting for people after the death of someone close. It also provides free resources for professionals and volunteers supporting bereaved people.

Blue Cross

Tel: 0800 096 6606

Web: www.bluecross.org.uk

Telephone and email support following the loss of a companion animal.

St Christopher's Hospice

St Christopher's Hospice provides a factsheet on how to cope with grief.

For more information see the link to their very helpful publication.

http://www.stchristophers.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/StChris_Bereavement-FINAL.pdf

Terence Higgins Trust

Counselling for those affected by HIV. West Street, Old Market, Bristol BS2 0BH

Email: info@aled-richards-trust.org.uk

Tel: 0117 9551000 or 0117 9541200.

Support for the loss of a baby or child

Rosie Crane Trust - Supporting bereaved parents

The Rosie Crane Trust supports bereaved parents who have lost a son or daughter of any age and at any stage in their bereavement.

The trust offers a confidential 24hr Listening Ear Helpline with trained, volunteer bereaved parents answering the phone to other bereaved parents who need someone to talk to.

They also have two drop-in centres in Somerset where bereaved parents can meet informally and talk to others who have had similar experiences to them in a friendly, safe, confidential environment, as well as a befriending service. Tel: 01460 55120 Helpline: 01460 55120 confidential 24hr Listening Ear Helpline email: contact@rosiecranetrust.co.uk
www.rosiecranetrust.org

Miscarriage Association

Tel: 01924 200799

www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk

Originally founded by people who had experienced miscarriage, it continues to provide support by professionals.

Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Charity (SANDS)

There is a local Sands group offering support in the Bristol and South Glos region.

We offer a local telephone service on 07970 930513. Please leave a message and someone will get back to you as soon as possible.

We also offer support groups both for bereavement and future pregnancies. These are held once a month in Bedminster library.

More information can be found on our [website](#).

Nationally Sands contact details are:

Telephone

The telephone helpline is free to call from landlines and mobiles on 0808 164 3332

The team are available to speak to from 9.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday and 6pm to 10pm Tuesday and Thursday evenings

We have an answerphone where callers can leave a message if the team are currently busy on other calls.

Email

The helpline team can also be contacted at helpline@sands.org.uk

The team are available to respond to emails from 9.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday and 6 to 10pm Tuesday and Thursday evenings

We aim to respond to all emails within 48 hours, except over the weekend when the helpline is closed. The team also respond to emails from outside the UK.

Website

www.sands.org.uk

Child Bereavement UK

Tel: 01494 568900 for the Information & Support Team

Web: www.childbereavement.org.uk

A charity that has a dual focus of training professionals who work with families and children affected by a death while also producing excellent resources that can be used by those who are bereaved. This includes families and professionals supporting children affected by the death of an adult or anyone affected by the death of a child.

Child Death Helpline

Tel: 0800 282986

Mon-Fri 1000-1300, Weds only 1300-1600

Web: www.childdeathhelpline.org

Helpline support for anyone affected by the death of a child, irrespective of the age of the child, the relationship or the length of time since the death. Provided by Great Ormond Street and Royal Liverpool Children's Hospitals.

Rainbow Centre for Children

Tel: 0117 985 3343

Web: <http://www.rainbowcentre.org.uk>

The Rainbow Centre for Children provides free and professional support to children and their families affected by life threatening illness and bereavement. Art, music and massage therapies, counselling, support and information are provided.

Winston's Wish

Helpline: 08452 03 04 05

Web: www.winstonswish.org.uk

Gives support for those caring for children affected by the death of a parent or a sibling and to the children themselves.

TCF (formerly The Compassionate Friends)

Tel: 0845 123 2304

Every day of the year

Web: www.tcf.org.uk

Support by telephone, befriending and local groups for anyone affected by the death of a child. Please note that this charity supports people irrespective of the age of the child at the time of death i.e. the child may have reached adulthood.

Childhood Bereavement Network

Tel: 020 7843 6309

Web: childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

Although this organisation is mainly a professional network, its website has a good search facility on the front page to allow you to find support services for children in your local area.

Support for carers and anyone in South Gloucestershire who has lost someone close to them

South Gloucestershire Council

The council provides a directory of advice and information on mental health and encouraging positive wellbeing. The guide signposts you to groups and activities you could take part in to help you promote and manage your mental health and wellbeing. You can download the guide or read it online at <http://edocs.southglos.gov.uk/mentalwellbeing>

Please see the link below for help and contact details of where to go for support.

www.southglos.gov.uk/mh

South Gloucestershire Talking Therapies

<https://iapt-sglos.awp.nhs.uk/>

It always helps to have someone to talk to, whatever stage of life you are at.

Talking Therapies provides a range of therapies to help with people's differing emotional needs. You can self-refer to their services via the website by either completing a registration form or by booking directly.

Finding someone to talk to

British Association of Counselling & Psychotherapy

Professional association and accrediting body for counsellors.

Web: www.bacp.co.uk includes a 'Find a Counsellor' section

Tel: 01455 883300 There is a counselling directory for finding someone in your area who can help.

The website also provide useful information on loss and bereavement they also write article on anxiety, depression and loss.

<http://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/>

Bristol University

provides help and support available for students who are grieving. They also run workshops on loss.

<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/student-counselling/self-help/bereavement/>

Bereavement after caring for someone

Bereavement after being a carer can be a difficult time for a number of reasons. You are likely to experience a great deal of sadness, and although you may not feel like getting help in dealing with your grief, organisations can help you cope with your loss by offering counselling and support through this trying time.

Everyone deals with bereavement in their own individual way, however it is important to allow yourself to grieve either at the time of death or shortly after, or else the feelings can remain bottled up inside causing deep-rooted emotional problems.

For carers who require personal support at this time, the Carers' Support Centre provide free, confidential services to give you short term practical and emotional help and advise you about necessary arrangements and decisions that have to be made. This support, information and advice is for carers of any age living in the Bristol and South Gloucestershire areas.

A local carer whose wife passed away after living with dementia says:

"It's inevitable that carers experience a form of bereavement during the progress of the illness because the person they knew is no longer there. I was aware of this during the 20 years I cared for my wife, at home at first and then when she went to a nursing home. I had expected that I would have experienced the total effects of bereavement during this period but what I had not expected was the aftermath of my wife's death, which left me with no energy and general depression. It is easy to become isolated if you have been a carer for a long time and especially if the person you cared for has changed and no longer recognises you.

It is vital to need to re-establish the purpose of life if you can continue to be involved with support groups and take advantage of friendships already forged within these groups."

Carers Trust

An organisation for carers formed by the merging of Crossroad Care and the Princess Royal Trust for Carers.

If you are a carer and need support, contact the online support team at support@carers.org

Tel: 0844 800 4361 Cardiff CF11 9HB

Tel: 0292 009 0087

Age UK South Gloucestershire

Age UK South Gloucestershire offers a Befriending Service for support.

Tel: 01454 411707

Email: info@ageuksouthglos.org.uk

The Healthy Lifestyles Directory

South Gloucestershire Council produces a Healthy Lifestyles Directory which aims to help you lead a full and active life. It may be that you can only take little steps at first but by joining a local Friendship Club or a local Art Club you may find a way to move forward with your life.

The Healthy Lifestyles Directory details many activities in South Gloucestershire for example, ballroom dancing, tai chi, folk club, tea dance, badminton and much more. Available from your local library or a council office or available to download.

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/Healthy-Lifestyles-Directory-2016-2.pdf>

After a period of time you may want to consider volunteering or supporting others who have been in a similar position as you or mentoring a younger person. You may find it useful to visit your local volunteer centre or contact the council about mentoring.

<http://www.volunteeringsouthglos.org.uk/>

The Volunteer Centre Partnership

CVS, Poole Court, Poole Court Drive, Yate, Bristol BS37 5PP Tel: 01454 862505

Churches

Churches can often provide a point of contact and a focal point for support it maybe that they can offer non church activities to help you regain a social life.

Wellaware

Wellaware is a signposting and information service for health and wellbeing events and activities across the Bristol and South Gloucestershire area. Go to their website and see how you can become involved.

Web: <http://www.wellaware.org.uk/>

Music and singing

Taking part in music-based activities can also be a good exercise that energises, lifts and refreshes the mind, body and spirit. Look out for groups, events and community choirs in your area.

The University of the Third Age (U3A)

The University of the Third Age (U3A) offers a wealth of activities, suiting a range of interests.

Tel: 01454 316556 (Yate)

Tel: 01454 614253 (Thornbury)

Tel: 0117 9506807 (Bristol)

First Stop Advice

Web: www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk

FirstStop Advice is an independent, free service providing advice and information for older people, their families and carers about care and housing options in later life. FirstStop also offers useful information for carers looking for support and advice.

Walking to Health

South Gloucestershire Council provide free walks through our Walking to Health Programme Everyone is welcome and the walks are a good, easy way to chat to new people whilst enjoying the outdoor and improving wellbeing. The directory of weekly walks are available from libraries, council offices or online. Many people have found it a useful way to meet and make new friends, keep fit and have an activity to look forward to each week.

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/staying-healthy/getting-active/walking-for-hea>

lth/walking-for-health-programme-of-walks/

Simple activities can often can help distract you, for example walking and being outdoors can be a great mood lifter.