

# WELLBEING GUIDE

## to bereavement support



# Bereavement

## What is Bereavement?

*Bereavement is the experience of losing someone or something important to us. Losing something important to us can be as impactful as losing someone we love. When someone dies it can bring up a multitude of feelings. Whether it was unexpected or if they had been ill for a while, it will often feel like a shock and the feelings of loss will affect us in different ways. It can be an emotionally painful time.*

*There are several stages to a bereavement. It is a process that we go through and we may experience the stages in any order and for any length of time.*

## The Five Stages of Grief – Kübler-Ross

### Denial

Even if we know that someone has died it can be hard to believe they are not coming back. It's also very common to feel the presence of someone who has died, hear their voice or even see them.

### Anger

Anger is a completely natural emotion. Death can seem cruel and unfair. It's common to feel angry towards the person who has died, or angry at ourselves for things we did or didn't do before their death.

### Bargaining

Bargaining is when we start to make deals in the hope of some relief. It's common to find ourselves going over and over things that happened in the past and asking a lot of 'what if?' questions, wishing we could go back and change things in the hope things could have turned out differently.

### Depression

Sadness and longing are what we think of most often when we think about grief. This pain can be very intense and come in waves over many months or years. Life can feel like it no longer holds any meaning, which can be very scary.

### Acceptance

Gradually most people find that the pain eases and it is possible to accept what has happened. We may never 'get over' the death of someone, but we can learn to live while keeping the memories of those we have lost close to us.

There are models of grief and we have shared one such example. It is important to note that although there are stages, these are not linear and anyone may jump between them, the process of grief is never the same for everyone.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Grief is a normal emotion that we should recognise and acknowledge. Sometimes we feel terrible pain and other times we feel nothing. All of this is normal - be kind to yourself, forgive yourself for any feelings of regret or anger relating to the loss. It is common following a bereavement to regret things you didn't do or that you would have said differently if you could go back. Be compassionate and accepting of yourself.

**There is no right  
or wrong way to grieve.**

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### **Things you may find helpful**

- ✓ Take one day at a time. Accept that you will have good days and bad days.
- ✓ Look after your own health through routine, eating well, staying hydrated, a regular sleeping pattern and regular light exercise. Support yourself emotionally by taking care of yourself physically.
- ✓ It's important to talk either with family or friends or to professionals.
- ✓ Stay in touch with family and friends, they may help to distract you or offer emotional support.
- ✓ Consider ways to keep memories of your loved one. You could make a memory box or talk to others to hear how they remember them.

Use this space to note down what you are going to try:

A large, empty white rounded rectangular box with rounded corners, intended for the user to write down their plans or notes. It occupies most of the page below the instruction.

## Further help and support

If you need further support, you can contact:

- **Cruse Bereavement Care**
  - [cruse.org.uk](https://www.cruse.org.uk)
- **University Counselling and Wellbeing Service**
  - [reading.ac.uk/essentials/support-and-wellbeing/counselling-and-wellbeing](https://reading.ac.uk/essentials/support-and-wellbeing/counselling-and-wellbeing)
- **University Student Welfare**
  - [reading.ac.uk/essentials/support-and-wellbeing/welfare](https://reading.ac.uk/essentials/support-and-wellbeing/welfare)
- **NHS – Grief after Bereavement or Loss**
  - [nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/grief-bereavement-loss](https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviours/feelings-and-symptoms/grief-bereavement-loss)
- **University Chaplaincy**
  - [reading.ac.uk/chaplaincy](https://reading.ac.uk/chaplaincy)