

Bereavement: the first twelve months and beyond

We would like to acknowledge the contribution that our clients, the social work team, the Bereavement Team and Vera Russell, Social Worker, have made to the development of this booklet.

Information and support for families and friends during bereavement

Bereavement services co-ordinator

Greenwich Hospital

For further information, education, support and specialist bereavement counselling.

P 02 9903 8333

HammondCare main office

Level 2, 447 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000

P 02 8280 8444

F 02 9267 3103



We are here to help you

- 3 The first few days
- 3 Organising a funeral
- 5 Financial assistance
- 6 Legal matters
- 7 Who to notify
- 8 About grief
- 9 Impact of grief
- 11 How long does it take? The first year
- 11 The first couple of months
- 12 Around three months
- 13 After the first three months
- 13 Sexuality and intimacy
- 14 Visiting the grave
- 14 Twelve months: anniversaries and special occasions
- 14 After the first year
- 15 How to help yourself readjust
- 17 How to help the bereaved
- 19 Children, adolescents and grief
- 20 Books on grief
- 21 Useful contacts and websites
- 22 Community resources

We would like to express our sincere sympathy to you and your family.

As part of our service, we are available to support you, your family and friends in the coming weeks and months of your bereavement.

Bereavement Services offer information about grief and available assistance, support and specialist counselling services.

This package has been designed to include a range of information which may be of use to you and your family and friends. Understanding what may be happening for you in your bereavement will not necessarily lessen your pain but it can help you manage better.

Please feel free to contact our bereavement services staff or the pastoral care staff if you have any questions, or need further help.

The first few days

While everyone grieves differently, many bereaved family members talk about not being able to really believe that the person has died, about needing to tell other family members and friends, of not knowing what needs to be done.

“Some how it didn’t seem real, it all seemed a blur and yet I knew he had died. Each time I had to tell someone else the tears came flooding back”.

It can be a time when you may find family and friends helpful. It can be useful to accept offers of assistance. For example you may prefer not to be at home alone or may not feel safe driving. Where possible tell your friends and family what feels right for you. It is important that you look after yourself at this time, take care to eat as well as you can and get rest. Caring for a person during their illness can leave you very tired.

Notifying family and friends and organising a funeral are the first major tasks. You may prefer to call everyone yourself or accept assistance with making some of the calls.

Organising a funeral

A funeral provides you with an opportunity to gather with friends and family to mourn and celebrate the life of the person who died. It is an important time to grieve, to remember and give thanks for their life.

In the normal course of events, the Medical Certificate of Death is signed at the hospital or by your local doctor if the death has occurred at home. The medical officer also signs a Cremation Certificate if this is the preferred option of the family.

A funeral director will need to be chosen. The choice is usually based on practical matters such as cost and location. Reputation and recommendations of other people are also useful guides. Sometimes the deceased has pre paid their own funeral. Finding out information about funeral directors could be delegated to a family member or friend.

The funeral director will arrange the transfer of the deceased from the place of death, and obtain all the relevant details and certificates required for burial or cremation.

Organising a funeral may seem difficult at the time, and it can be helpful to accept assistance from family and friends. Remember that there is no need to have a funeral quickly. Families often welcome an opportunity to come together and decide what sort of funeral best suits them.

There are several important decisions to be made – what were the known preferences of the deceased, would you and your family like a viewing to see your deceased family member again, if you will have a service where would you prefer to have the service, what should be included in the service, whether there will be a cremation or burial and whether you will have a social gathering of friends and family after the funeral? It is also important to include personal expressions of your love in your planning.

To assist with organising the funeral, a meeting can be held either at the offices of the funeral director or in the home of the family. The funeral director will provide as little or as much as the family requires.

Costs of a funeral can vary considerably and are determined by the type of services required, the cost of the coffin, flowers and funeral notices, etc. The funeral director will advise on what needs to be done, give you options, and will then co-ordinate arrangements according to your wishes. The Funeral Director is now obliged to provide an itemised quote.

“Looking back on the funeral, I am proud of myself. I wanted it to be a celebration of her life. Everyone was there, our grandchildren and children all said something during the service. She would have loved it”.

“I found including the children very helpful. They wanted to place photos and some of their drawings in their grandfather’s coffin. It felt right for us.”

“We all talked about whether we would like a family viewing. Most of us found it helpful, a quiet time to say goodbye.”



Further information can be found in our pamphlet *Planning A Meaningful Funeral*. If you have any questions at this time, feel free to get in touch with either the Pastoral Care or Social Work section of your Palliative Care Team.

Financial assistance

The person who negotiates with a Funeral Director and signs the paperwork is legally responsible for the account. If financial difficulties are likely to be experienced, it is a good idea to approach more than one funeral director explaining the circumstances. Many are willing to negotiate fees. There are various other forms of financial assistance.

“There was so much to do and I found it hard to find the energy to concentrate and understand all the legal stuff. My family were a great support, even though I am not used to having to ask for help. We have always been very independent.”

Centrelink

Centrelink have a helpful booklet called *Are you needing help after someone has died?* This can be obtained by phoning 132 300 or downloading from the web www.centrelink.gov.au.

A Bereavement Allowance equivalent to 14 weeks of the married rate is payable to a pensioner whose spouse has died. This can be payable as a lump sum or over the 7 pay dates following death.

When a single pensioner dies, his or her estate is entitled to one payment after death.

Carer's Payment recipients are entitled to 14 weeks of payment after the death of the pensioner who had been in their care.

To discuss any bereavement payment entitlements telephone Centrelink on 132 300 to discuss your individual situation.

Department of Veterans' Affairs - Funeral benefits

A funeral benefit is a one-off payment made by DVA to assist in covering the funeral costs of veterans and, in some cases, their dependants. Phone 13 32 54.

Charitable agencies & financial counselling services

Contact the your Palliative Care team social worker for further information on available assistance.

Financial institutions

Loans may be available from banks or other financial institutions. Each application is assessed on its merits.

Deceased estate

Monies from the estate of the person who died may be released prior to probate, or letters of administration being granted by banks and financial institutions to pay a funeral director. You will need to provide them with a copy of the Death Certificate and the funeral account. Many agencies require that any photocopies of the will and death certificate are sighted and signed by a Justice of the Peace to certify that they are true copies.

Debts

You do not have to pay any of the deceased person's debts unless the debt is in joint names. Debts can be paid out of the estate. The executor of the will should take care of these matters.

Legal matters

Will

A will is a legal document that instructs you about the deceased person's wishes. Someone is named as executor of the will and this person(s) is responsible to distribute the deceased person's assets and belongings to the beneficiaries named in the will. The executor is also responsible for payment of any debts from the estate assets.

If no will exists you should seek legal advice from the NSW Trustee and Guardian, Legal Aid or a private solicitor. The NSW Supreme Court, Probate Section can also assist with information. They can be contacted on 9230 8111. They have an informative web site – www.lawlink.nsw.gov.au The social worker from your palliative care team can also provide information and assistance.

Probate

An application for probate is made to the Probate Registry of the Supreme Court. A Grant of Probate recognises the authority of the executor(s) to deal with the estate and entitles the executor to collect and pay debts and distribute the estate as directed by the will. The documents for Probate can be provided by your solicitor, they may be download them from the Internet or they can be purchased from a legal stationery supplier.

About grief

Real estate

The Land Titles office always requires Probate if property or land that is being distributed in a will is in the deceased person's name only. If the deceased person is a joint tenant, the property can automatically be transferred without Probate.

Who to notify

There are a number of people and institutions to be notified of a death. The affairs of the person who died will need to be finalised. Most of these people will need notification in writing and a certified copy of the Death Certificate and will.

The following is a list of such people and organisations:

- The Executor of the will.
- Professional Bodies e.g. Solicitor or Accountant.
- Landlord.
- Australian Taxation Office.
- Electoral Office.
- Banks and/or Credit Unions.
- Roads & Traffic Authority.
- Medicare/Health Funds.
- Centrelink/Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Insurance companies.
- Superannuation Funds.
- Department store accounts.
- Community services/Clubs.
- Council/Rates.
- Electricity/gas/water.
- Local Council – rates.
- Telephone company.
- Medicare/Private Health Fund.
- GP and other medical professionals.
- Clubs and organisations.

Grief is our response to loss. Grief includes a wide range of responses which vary with each person, available support, your personality, life experiences and the nature of the loss. Bereavement is the loss of someone through death.

The grief experienced in response to death is individual, unique and personal. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Some people seem to manage their grief more “easily” than others, it doesn't mean they are not grieving. We are all different. Comparing our grief reactions is not helpful.

The grief we experience in response to death can impact on every dimension of our being, our body, our thoughts, our behaviour, our emotions, our relationships, our hopes and dreams, and our spirituality.

While every person's experience of grief will be unique, there are similarities in the patterns of grief. Some points to remember are:

- It is normal and healthy to experience and express intense and painful emotions.
- Grieving is important for healing the wound of separation and change.
- The painful feelings will diminish with time.
- There is no correct time-frame or way of grieving.
- Grief is not about 'letting go' or 'moving on'. It is about becoming accustomed to a world which will be forever different, and remembering the person who died in whatever way is right for you. People die – relationships don't.

“We are all missing him dreadfully. It is interesting though to see how differently we are grieving. One son says he manages by keeping busy and getting back into things. My daughter likes to talk about her father, we share stories of happier times and cry together. Our other son is feeling very emotional, he says it is like being on a roller coaster. I still can't believe he is gone, I keep thinking Sammy will walk in the door”.



Impact of grief

Physical responses you may experience

- Decreased appetite
- Tiredness and lethargy
- Sleeplessness or sleeping a lot
- Decreased/increased sexual drive
- Shortness of breath
- Palpitations
- Lack of energy
- Gastro-intestinal upsets
- Dry Mouth

Remember see your GP if you have any concerns about your health.

Emotional responses you may experience

- Sadness
- Anger
- Irritability
- Despair
- Numbness
- Guilt
- Helplessness
- Yearning, longing, pining
- Fear
- Anxiety
- Relief

Thoughts you may experience

- Forgetfulness
- Inability to concentrate or think clearly
- Confusion
- Difficulty making decisions
- Distraction
- Vagueness
- Obsessive thinking
- Denial
- Hallucinations, dreams

You may feel you are going crazy.

Behavioural responses you may experience

- Hyperactivity
- Restlessness
- Social withdrawal
- Lethargy and tiredness
- Lack of motivation
- Low self esteem

Spiritual responses you may experience

- Questioning of previously held religious beliefs
- Questions about the meaning of life
- Loss of faith
- Strengthening of spiritual connections.

Not everyone will experience all these reactions. You may only experience a few. The intensity of your responses will fluctuate, gradually reducing in frequency over time. However we experience our grief – the impact of a death of someone we love is far reaching.



How long does it take?

The first year

There is no set time-frame. The following is a guide, remembering that each of us is unique in our grieving. Everyone copes differently. It is not useful to compare your way of grieving with that of other people. Some people need to talk about their feelings. Some people are more private. Some people cope better by keeping busy. Some people cannot manage to do much at all.

"I find I am crying at the least possible thing and funnily enough I feel better after a good cry"

"I try to keep busy. I find walking and working in the garden keeps me sane"



The first couple of months

Most people will feel some form of shock, numbness or unreality initially. This is our body's way of insulating us a little from the full extent of the impact of the death.

After the funeral there are often feelings of unreality and emptiness. You may feel quite disoriented, referring to the deceased in the present tense, at times forgetting that they have died. This can be quickly followed by periods of sadness as the reality returns.

There are lots of formalities to attend to even though you may feel it is hard to focus on anything. Notifying services means you have to tell others about the deceased and this can be very painful. Although these tasks are difficult, they can provide a sense of purpose when you may be feeling lost.

If your partner has died, this can also be a time when you may start to realise the many unnoticed things they may have given you or done for you. You may have to learn new skills and take on unfamiliar tasks.

There may be pressure to dispose of the deceased's belongings and clothes. You will know when you are ready to do this. Some people like to do this immediately while others leave it much longer. Having familiar sights and smells in your home can be comforting and provide powerful ways of remembering.

Sometimes during these early weeks some people have a strong feeling that the deceased person is near. This can be comforting or disturbing.

"I say goodbye as I leave and hello when I return, just as I always did when he was at home. I speak to him and find it comforting."

Around three months

Not uncommonly, people will say that they feel worse at this time. This is when the body's protective hormonal mechanisms are wearing off. The funeral and other practical matters have been attended to, and those around you are returning to their routines. You are trying to return to your own routine and/or trying to establish new ones.

Just when family and friends are expecting you will be a bit better the pain of your bereavement often increases. You may feel you are getting worse or going backwards. The permanence of your loss becomes more of a reality.

Some people feel unusually unmotivated, distracted, or lacking in energy, and have to push themselves to do things that they would normally enjoy. Some people are able to return to their usual activities while having sad or thoughtful times as they remember the deceased.

"Sometimes I just wish that I had gone with her, I feel so lonely. I don't mean I would do anything. That would be too hard for the kids. I miss her so much."



For some, life without the deceased feels unbearable and you may wish that you too had died. At times people contemplate suicide. These thoughts are an expression of extreme distress and it is important to talk about them with a health professional.

The process of becoming accustomed to a world which will be forever different takes time. For most, at least the first year may be full of many ups and downs as you adjust to a new reality. Old feelings from the past may resurface. You may find yourself reassessing life – searching for new meaning, and questioning old ideas and values. It is, in fact, a very busy time and can be exhausting. Grieving takes far more energy than we imagine.

Further information can be found in our pamphlet, *Understanding Grief*.

After the first three months

For many, this is a time of feeling very alone. Even when you have the support of other family and friends you can feel lonely. You can find yourself going over and over memories, feeling preoccupied and forgetful with everyday matters. You may find you have unbidden outbursts of emotions that you find difficult and at times embarrassing.

As you come to terms with the reality of your loss, your senses may seem to play tricks, catching sight of your loved family member or friend, only to be disappointed. You may find yourself wanting to visit significant places. Accepting the reality that this change is permanent can be a slow process. Your mood and behaviour may continue to be erratic.

“The hardest thing for me is the unbidden and chaotic emotions. I can be at the shops, driving, hear a piece of music...anything, anywhere.”



Grief can feel like a roller-coaster ride, and it can be very unpredictable. However, gradually over the months following a death, the times in between the moments of grief become longer and the feelings lessen in intensity.

Friends and family may be resuming their lives, you may feel not understood. If your partner has died you may also feel you do not fit in with your social group.

Sexuality and intimacy

After the death of a partner you may feel anxious, miss the closeness, intimacy and sexuality that was part of your relationship. This may not be easily talked about or understood by family and friends. You may feel that you will never, or do not wish to, meet anyone as special again or you may feel you need companionship and a close relationship.

If you have lost a child or parent you too may also miss the special hugs, closeness and understanding that can be part of your special relationship.

Visiting the Grave

Like all aspects of your grief, visiting the grave is a very personal decision. For some, visiting the grave is very special, it allows closeness to the deceased. Some people visit only on birthdays and anniversaries, some never visit. You will know when and if you need to visit the grave and who you may need with you for support.

Twelve months: anniversaries and special occasions

Special occasions such as religious days, birthdays, holidays and other anniversaries may be difficult, especially in the first year. The time of the anniversary of the death of your loved family member or friend can be a very significant and often difficult time.

You may find that in the time leading up to the anniversary of the death, there is a re-remembering of the events leading up to the death, and a resurgence of very intense feelings with a need for extra support. Planning ahead for such special days may help. There is no need to feel alarmed if you experience this. It is a normal part of grief.

Further information can be found in our pamphlet *Grief: coping with anniversaries, religious celebrations and special occasions*.

After the first year

During the first year of grief many of you will have experienced intense emotions. For some people the second year can continue to be very difficult. You may be having other stressful events in your life as well. It may be that the person who has died would have been the very person to support you in difficult times.

Some grieving people feel even more alone and struggle to find any meaning in their life without the person who has died. You may feel you should be managing better by now.

The mix and intensity of emotions and thoughts after a death can be overwhelming. It is not uncommon to feel mentally and physically exhausted. The following points may help you look after yourself during this time.

How to help yourself readjust

- Talking about the person who has died, your thoughts and feelings can be helpful.
- Give yourself permission to grieve. Allow yourself to grieve in your own time and your own way. Don't let anyone else tell you what you should be doing or how you should be feeling.
- Give yourself quiet time alone. Avoid always being very busy and being with other people.
- Grief involves managing the many practical problems as well. Try your best not to feel overwhelmed by these problems. Deal with each problem one at a time and accept help and support.
- Be kind to yourself. You are your own best friend.
- Give yourself breaks from your grief, it is like very hard work.
- Looking at photos, sharing stories or writing a journal can help.
- Try not to isolate yourself. Try to accept help from family and friends. As much as possible allow them to care for you and nurture you.
- Take time to pamper or indulge yourself – do something special. At first, things might seem pointless and without pleasure, but do them anyway, as they may refresh you and may ease tension.
- Look after yourself. Grief can place a strain on your health. Diet is important when you are grieving. A healthy diet will help fight infection. During the early days, you may not feel like eating but small healthy regular meals are important. Gentle exercise, fresh air and being outdoors can relieve stress and lethargy. Rest and sleep are important.
- Physical exercise like walking and swimming can improve your mood and energy levels.
- Massage, relaxation and meditation can ease tension.
- Be wary of advice-givers. Well meaning people offer many suggestions. Pick and choose what works for you.
- Avoid relying on drugs and alcohol for support. Although your pain may be eased temporarily, it will return once the drug has worn off. It is healthier to experience your feelings, even if it seems more painful in the short term.
- Learn more about what to expect in your bereavement. Information can help your understanding and prevent unrealistic expectations.
- Understand your friends. Know which of your friends are able to listen. Some of your friends may be better at giving practical help or offering respite from your grief with offers of outings or movies. You may need to tell your friends what you need at any particular time. Our community is not comfortable with grief and often friends feel at a loss about what to say or do. Accept offers of practical help.
- Be prepared for the ups and downs of grief. You will have bad days. It can help if you do not expect too much of yourself. It can help to be flexible and change your plans if necessary. You may need to do something to look after yourself, to give yourself respite from your grief or to help you express your feelings.
- Taking one day at a time and not looking too far ahead can be helpful.
- Set yourself small goals and plans at first. Initially you may not enjoy activities in the way you may have before. Small goals and pleasures can keep you going, give your life a little meaning and provide purpose and direction.
- While not giving up hope of feeling better, do not let others minimize your loss and grief. Many people in the community are uncomfortable with grief and will try to make you feel better.
- Be patient with yourself and allow yourself time to grieve. It can take longer than you may initially think.
- The intensity of your grief does not usually last forever. Each person's grief will last for a different period of time. Sometimes in families these differences in grieving can result in tension and disagreement. Accepting and understanding individual differences can be helpful.
- Where possible avoid making big changes or decisions too early. It is a difficult time to know what you want and need.
- Your family will also be affected by grief. Family members can have different reactions. There will be times when you trigger other family member's grief. Roles and responsibilities in your family may need to be changed. You may find it helpful to share your grief or to seek support outside the family.
- You do not have to make sense of your loss or fit it into your religious beliefs or meaning of life immediately. This takes time.
- It can be helpful to tell yourself that you will get through this. Even though this may not seem possible now, there are many other grieving people who are managing. Negative thoughts can make your grief and self esteem worse.
- Seeking out people who have also experienced the death of a loved family member or friend can be helpful. Support groups are available.
- Ask for help. You do not have to cope with this on your own. Many people seek professional assistance to help them with normal grieving and more complicated or prolonged grief.
- Your loss will mean life will never be the same, you will never forget the person, there will always be reminders but the pain will lessen. It can be helpful to decide that something meaningful will result from your loss.
- Grief is a part of life. We can learn and grow through our loss.
- When you feel ready, find rewarding activities, people, beliefs or activities.

How to help people who are bereaved

Each person will grieve in a unique and personal way. It is important to allow people the time and space to grieve as they choose. However, support is important to their healing process, and can be very beneficial. The following are some points to keep in mind as you help someone who is grieving.

- Be available to listen if the person wants to talk about the person who died. Bereaved people often want to talk a lot about the person who died. Do not change the conversation or avoid using the name of the person who died. Avoiding talking about the person who died is often thought to help but this may not be true.
Try to maintain the usual form of relationship you had, although at times they may need to have more time to talk and express their sorrow. If it would be a usual part of your relationship, continue with physical signs of comfort, such as touch and hugs.
- Try not to avoid the person. This might well add to their sense of loss.
- Do not be afraid to cry or express feelings. This may help the person know that they are not alone, and that someone understands.
- Avoid pat answers and platitudes such as, 'I know just how you feel.' Such answers rarely console, and it is often better to say nothing at all – simply 'be there'.
- Be patient, don't rush. The grieving process takes longer than we allow it.
- Be comfortable with silence. Sometimes it is simply your company that is needed.
- Be aware that the self-esteem of the person may be low, and that they will initially appear very self-centred. This will diminish with time.
- Inform yourself about all the reactions we can have when we are grieving.
- Encourage the person to rest, eat well and care for themselves in a way that feels right for them.
- Be aware that you may feel uncomfortable and may feel you do not know what to say.

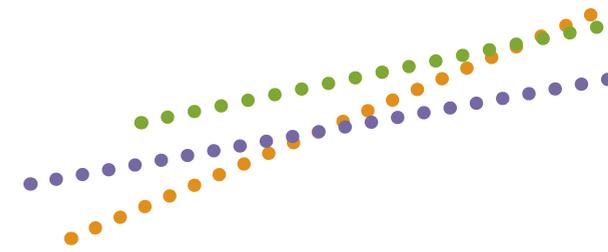
"I was extremely hurt by some of my friends and couldn't understand others. I am sure one friend crossed the road rather than talk to me. Others would not mention my husband's name. It was like he had not died or even existed. Others just said how hard it was to know what to say or do and we somehow got through that difficult beginning to our conversation. Others couldn't do enough."

The bereaved person may not want to feel better in the beginning. They may be caught up in feelings which link them with the person who died, This will change over time.

- Sometimes the pain of bereavement is so intense that thoughts of suicide may occur. Contact the person's doctor or the Mental Health Team.
- Offer help with practical matters. Often very simple tasks are difficult when one is exhausted by grief. It is most helpful to offer your help rather than asking the person if they want help, as decision-making can be difficult.
- Support groups and/or professional counselling can help some people. Providing information about this can be useful. The person can then make their own decision about following these suggestions.
- Weekends, evenings, anniversaries and holidays can be especially painful for the person and extra care and support may be appreciated.
- Give special attention to any children in the family. They are also grieving.
- Be aware of your own feelings and needs. You may also be grieving. It is important to care for yourself at this time as well.
- Remember that grief can last for a long time. Continue to visit, make calls, share your own life and thoughts – anything which reminds the person that they are valued and that you care for them.
- Remember grieving takes much longer than you think.

"Their lives have not changed or are returning to normal and somehow I think they think I should be over it by now, it is not that easy for me."

Children, adolescents and grief



Children and adolescents also grieve. They will do so in ways which are appropriate to their age and developmental stage. Whatever their age, it is important to be honest with them and include them. Children's understanding of death develops as they do. How you talk to a child about death will depend on their age and level of understanding.

Whatever the cultural, spiritual or religious beliefs of your family, information should be shared with the child in age-appropriate language. Children and adolescents appreciate being spoken to in a straight forward manner about important things.

There is no need to overload children with detail – it is simply important not to evade questions. If there are questions you cannot answer, say so. A child will respect that. It is important that you are answering the question that the child is asking. Clarify what they want to know if you are not sure.

It is important not to hide feelings from children, nor expect children to express their grief in the same way as adults. Their emotions and behaviour can change quite quickly. Children often express their feelings through behaviour by 'acting out' in aggressive, rebellious or clinging ways. Limit-setting around such behaviour is important.

Children of all ages may, at times, appear not to be grieving at all. Children are able to 'switch off' from their grief by playing and laughing, and appearing to behave as if nothing is different. This is simply their way of managing their death anxiety by reassuring themselves that life goes on.

Children and adolescents, like adults, do not need advice. They need information about what to expect, love and understanding, and an opportunity to express their grief in a safe and supportive environment.

Further information can be found in our pamphlet, *Children & grief: information for parents*.

Books on grief

Some people find books a helpful source of information. The following books are a cross-section of what is available and by no means exhaustive. Many are available in local libraries or can easily be obtained from larger bookstores.

Adult

Coping with Grief. Mal and Dianne McKissock.

Now that the Funeral is Over. Doris Zagdanski.

I don't know what to say. Doris Zagdanski.

Understanding the Effects of Our Grief. Doris Zagdanski.

Grieving: How to go on living when someone you love dies. Therese A Rando.

The Grief of Our Children. Dianne McKissock.

Good Grief Westberg Granger E.

Children

Badger's Parting Gifts. Sue Varley.

Waterbugs and Dragonflies. D. Stickney.

My Grandpa Died Today. Joan Fassler.

How it Feels when a Parent Dies. J. Kremenz.

Adolescents

Something I have never felt before: How teenagers cope with grief. Doris Zagdanski.

I can do it but it's still hard. A Booklet for Teenagers about Grief. Southern Highlands Bereavement Care Service.

Useful contacts and websites

National Association of Loss and Grief

P 02 6882 9222
www.nalag.org.au

Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement

P 1800 642 066
www.grief.org.au

National Centre for Childhood Grief

P 1300 654 556
www.childhoodgrief.org.au

Southern Highlands Bereavement Care Service

P 02 4862 1701
www.shbcs.org.au

Compassionate Friends

P 02 9290 2355
www.thecompassionatefriends.org.au

CanTeen

P 1800 226 833
www.canteen.org.au

Cruse Bereavement Care (UK)

www.cruse.org.uk
www.rd4u.org.au

Winston's Wish (UK)

www.winstonswish.org.uk

Care Search (Aust)

www.caresearch.com.au

The Dougy Centre (USA)

www.dougy.org

Bereavement Care Centre

P 1300 654 556
www.bereavementcare.com.au

Community resources

There are a number of community groups and organisations which provide services for people who are bereaved. It is important to remember that everyone's grief is unique and very personal and that many people find that it helps to talk with someone who is not part of their family or close circle of friends.

Sometimes you may find that you do not need support now but then change your mind later. If this happens to you please make contact when you need assistance. No service will meet the needs of everyone. It is important to find a service that suits your needs.

Bereavement Care Centre & National Association for Childhood Grief

P 1300 654 556
Provides telephone information about bereavement and provides counselling for children, adolescents and adults.

Solace

P 02 9519 2820
Support group for widows and widowers.

Compassionate Friends

P 02 9290 2355
Volunteer bereaved parents assist families following the death of a child, and provide information to help others be supportive.

Cancer Helpline

P 131 120

Lifeline

P 131 114
Provides a 24-hour telephone counselling service.

National Association for Loss and Grief (NALAG)

P 02 6882 9222
Provides information about grief and has contact details for bereavement counsellors.

Private bereavement counsellors

Chaplains/pastoral care workers

Your local minister or pastoral care worker at your hospital.

Social workers

Your Palliative Care team or Hospital.