

## **GRIEVING**

### **How might it feel?**

**Taken from NHS Northern England Strategic Network**

**This leaflet describes some of the feelings that people may have when they grieve. Not everyone will experience all of these feelings, some will be felt more strongly than others and they may come in any order or be mixed up.**

**Bereavement is something which most of us experience at some point in our lives and loss can be a difficult experience. It can be hard to accept the loss of someone that we care about and we may feel confused and overwhelmed by the sadness and different emotions that overtake us. This is grieving.**

**Grieving is normal; people will react differently and in their own way. There is no time limit as to how long you may experience the feelings associated with grief – for some people it is a matter of months, for others it may take years, but you must allow yourself time for healing to take place.**

**Accepting that someone has died can be difficult – it may feel unreal. At first you might feel numb, and experience feelings of shock and disbelief. This is a common reaction.**

**Sometimes people feel ashamed of emotions such as guilt. You may have thoughts about what you think you should have done. You could have feelings of disloyalty when you find yourself enjoying old or new interests. It is alright to laugh and cry.**

**You may have strong feelings of anger – anger at yourself for the things you said or always meant to say and did not have the chance to.**

**Some people direct blame at others. Grieving is trying to make sense of something that often seems senseless; you may find yourself thinking “if only.....”**

Longing can be a big part of grief, for instance, looking for your loved one in a crowd. Even though you know they have died, you could think you have seen them or even heard their voice.

It is common to experience a low mood. People often feel tired, although find it difficult to sleep. You may feel hungry but at times unable to eat. There could be times that you only have a short span of concentration and are easily distracted. Simple problems can be viewed out of all proportion and you may find yourself in a state of panic.

You may feel run down, tired, or experience aches and pains. Whilst this can be a normal part of the grieving process, it may be helpful to seek advice from your GP.

If you have lost someone who has been a part of your life, your life can seem very empty. Feelings of isolation could be painfully strong, and you may feel lonely or sorry for yourself. People can seem to avoid you. They may not know what to say, or are finding it difficult to cope with their own feelings. It may be hard, but you could take the first step, letting them know that you welcome their friendship and support.

Sometimes it may seem that life would be more bearable if you made changes to avoid painful memories. Taking time before making important decisions may be helpful.

With time, memories usually become less painful. You should find yourself being able to remember, without becoming as upset. It is good to enjoy old or new interests, and make plans for the future.

### **THINGS TO CONSIDER**

- Allow yourself time to grieve, in the way that feels right for you. Remember there is no right or wrong way.
- Accept help from others.
- Take care of yourself, eat sensibly and check with your doctor about health worries.

- **Sharing your feelings with family and friends is not always easy. If this is so, the support organisations opposite will be happy to help.**
- **When the time feels right, try to find new ways to enjoy yourself.**

## **USEFUL CONTACTS**

**CRUSE Bereavement Care – telephone 0191 2765533**

**Samaritans – telephone 0845 790 9090**

**Macmillan Cancer Back Up - [www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)**

**Rip Rap (for young people over 12) - [www.riprap.org.uk](http://www.riprap.org.uk)**

**Winston's Wish (for children, young people and their families.  
[www.winstonswish.org.uk](http://www.winstonswish.org.uk)**

**Please ask your GP practice for details of other local support services.**