

Some Do's and Don'ts that might help

DON'T bottle up feelings

DO express your feelings as much as possible

DON'T avoid talking about what has happened

DO take care of yourself and remember that you need time to sleep, rest and think.

DON'T forget that children experience similar feelings and need to share in grief.

DO let children talk about their emotions and express themselves in games and drawings.

DO encourage children to return to school and let them continue with their activities

DON'T hurry yourself to overcome your grief. There is no fixed time that it takes to get over your loss.

DON'T make any major life changes while you are grieving. Give yourself lots of time to think about changes and discuss with others.

Useful Contacts

Your General Practitioner or District Nurse

Torbay Hospital Chaplain
(**(01803)** 654186

Samaritans
(08457 909090

Cruse Bereavement Care
(0300 330 5466
www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

Child Death Helpline
www.childdeathhelpline.org.uk
(0800 282 986

Pension Helpline
(0845 6060265

Age Concern
(0800 169 65 65
www.ageconcern.org.uk

War Pensions
(020 3207 2164

War Widows Associations
(0845 2412 189

Please also [access](#) Torbay Hospital's bereavement booklet for more advice and guidance.



Bereavement

Information for Relatives and Friends

*From the Rebecca
Notebook by
Daphne du Maurier*

"I would say to those who mourn – and I can only speak from experience – look upon each day that comes as a challenge, as a test of courage. The pain will come in waves, some days worse than others for no apparent reason. Accept the pain, do not suppress it. Never attempt to hide grief from yourself."

Physical Problems

Many bereaved people feel strained and physically run down. Grief is time consuming and exhausting.

You may get any of these symptoms:

- Breathlessness
- Palpitations, tightness in the chest and throat.
- Exhaustion
- Loss of appetite or overeating
- Sleep problems
- Symptoms similar to those of the person who has died

It is always important to share with your doctor any anxieties about such symptoms in order to gain reassurance.

When we lose something we tend to search for it and searching is a common reaction to bereavement. You may think you see the person who has died walking down the street, or hear them calling your name. Such vivid experiences can feel very frightening, but they are not unusual. They are not a sign that you are “going mad”. Just that you are really grieving still

Emotions

Even when death comes at the end of a long illness where it was expected, you are still likely to be left in a state of shock.

Shock may leave you feeling completely numb and it may be a useful protection, which gets you through the first few days. You may even find it hard to cry.

Acknowledging your feelings and expressing them is something that should not be avoided for long. It is part of a natural and healing process. You may feel any of the following:

- Guilt
- Panic
- Self-pity
- Anger (even with the dead person)
- Despair

You may also find that other feelings about previous losses come to the surface.

It is important to allow yourself to grieve remembering that all these feelings and reactions may come and go during bereavement.

Grief is a very individual process and everyone reacts differently, moving through it at their own pace.

Changes

It is sometimes very tempting to feel that life would be more bearable if you moved house, or disposed of possessions quickly. However, such changes usually make things worse and decisions like these must be given careful thought.

Children and Bereavement

Children, like adults, are individuals and will grieve in a variety of ways depending on their age and maturity. They may also need extra comfort and support and indeed, may go back temporarily to earlier stages of behaviour. Be ready to listen to their fears and anxieties at any stage.

Children may have a strong need to say their goodbyes, just as adults do – and the funeral is an important last opportunity to do this. Whenever possible, children should be encouraged to make their own decision about attending the funeral – and the decision may vary from child to child within the same family. Correct but simple explanations should be given beforehand about the funeral.

Some very helpful books are available relating to children and bereavement via resources on the back page.