



SUPPORT • EDUCATION • INFORMATION

What happens to us when we lose someone?
For most of us, bereavement will be the most psychologically distressing experience we will ever face. Grief is what we feel when somebody we love dies. The death of a significant person is a devastating loss.

What are some of the feelings we may experience?

- **Shock:** *"I can't believe it" "I feel nothing" "Why did it have to happen"* Many feel disorientated and almost as if they have lost their place in life.
- **Pain:** *"I feel such pain"* Physical and mental pain can feel completely overwhelming and very frightening. The pain of bereavement has been compared to that of losing a limb. It doesn't come back, you will always miss it but you also learn to adapt to living without it.
- **Anger:** Sometimes bereaved people can feel angry. This anger is a completely normal part of the grieving process.
- **Guilt:** *"If only"* You may feel guilty about things you said or did or that you didn't say or do. It is important to remember, at the time, that you did not have the power of hindsight you possess now.
- **Depression:** *"I feel so depressed, life has no meaning, I can't go on"* Many people say there are times after a death when they feel there is nothing worth living for and they feel like ending it all.
- **Longing:** *"I hear and see her, what is wrong with me?"* Thinking you are hearing or seeing someone who has died is a common experience and can happen when you least expect it.

- **Other people's reactions:** *"I think to understand it you really need to have been through it"* One of the hardest things to face when we are bereaved is the way other people react to us. They often do not know what to say or how to respond to our loss. This is hard for us because we may well want to talk about the person who has died. It can become especially hard as time goes on and other people's memories of the dead person fade.
- **Coping and adapting:** When someone close to us dies we have to cope and adjust to living in a world which is totally changed. Death is, after all, inevitable – that person is not going to come back. We may have to let go of some dreams built up and shared with the person who has died.

"Today my life is different as a result of what has happened. The inner strengths that I did not know I possessed have come to light"

BEREAVEMENT
SUPPORT WHEN YOU
NEED IT MOST

Understanding Grief