



Guide to Coping with Bereavement

Covid-19 (Coronavirus)

The loss of someone close can be devastating and a bereavement caused by COVID-19 is a very challenging kind of bereavement for many reasons. This leaflet is to offer support and guidance if you have lost someone due to COVID-19 or if you are supporting someone who has been bereaved in this way.

We all grieve differently and the way you grieve will be unique to you and will depend on many factors including the relationship you had with the person who has died, your cultural and religious beliefs and your support networks such as family and friends.

Our response to loss can change from hour to hour, day to day. Some days will be better than others and it is important to take things one step at a time. Our response to loss may contain a range of emotions, such as sadness, anger, guilt, frustration, emptiness and anxiety. Everyone experiences grief differently and there is no 'normal' or 'right' way to grieve.

Are you caring for someone who is bereaved?

If you are caring for someone who has been bereaved, whether you are a family member, friend, neighbour, charity volunteer or a professional, you are undertaking an important role. Simple gestures of kindness and caring acts at this time can be a great comfort to bereaved people.

Covid-19 and Bereavement

The COVID-19 global pandemic has and will continue to result in the substantial loss of life across many countries including the UK. Preparing for and knowing how to manage grief and what to expect can be of help at such a difficult time.

A death from Covid-19 may mean that there has been or will be:

- little time to prepare for a loved one's death following a period of illness
- no time spent in person with a loved one before they died, due to the risk of infection and social distancing rules
- an inability to say goodbye in the usual manner after death due to restrictions around attending funerals, public gatherings and travel
- isolation issues as people may be grieving while separated from family or friends, who may also be grieving but in distant locations
- practical challenges, for example if the person bereaved was previously receiving care from someone who has died and/or has responsibilities to care for others or has ongoing work or family responsibilities
- issues around coping with a shocking bereavement at a time when the bereaved person, or others in their circle of family and friends, may also be unwell with COVID-19.

Asking for help

It is not always easy to ask for help and it takes courage. Start by accepting that you need help. Ask someone you feel you can trust – a friend, a tutor, or parent. A conversation with someone you trust can help a lot.

Support from the University Counselling Service

You may want to contact the University Counselling Service. Talking to a counsellor can help you find your way through the painful and otherwise lonely process of grieving and help you to make sense of your feelings. UWS is committed to supporting your wellbeing and the counselling team is continuing to operate. Please email hub@uws.ac.uk to set up a counselling session.

Support from the University Multifaith Team

The University also has a Multifaith Team who can support students who are experiencing grief. The team includes members of a wide range of different faiths, including Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Humanist, Jewish, Muslim, Quaker and Sikh. Talk to one of the team in confidence. You can make an appointment by emailing: multifaithchaplaincy@uws.ac.uk

Silvercloud

UWS has gifted access to Silvercloud to all students. It is a virtual therapy tool with excellent support and guidance on how to manage feelings of grief and loss.

Sign up at <https://uws.silvercloudhealth.com/signup/>

Reading for Wellbeing

The counselling team have compiled a list of self-help books for those experiencing grief and loss. These books are available from the university library and many can be accessed online.

www.uws.ac.uk/media/5642/reading-for-wellbeing.pdf

External resources

Sudden offers helpful information and advice to people who have been bereaved by COVID-19 and to people caring for others who have been bereaved due to COVID-19:

www.suddendeath.org/covid-19-bereavement

Cruse Bereavement Care is a national Bereavement charity. They have useful information on their website www.cruse.org.uk, helpline number 0808 808 1677 and can be contacted by email:

helpline@cruse.org.uk