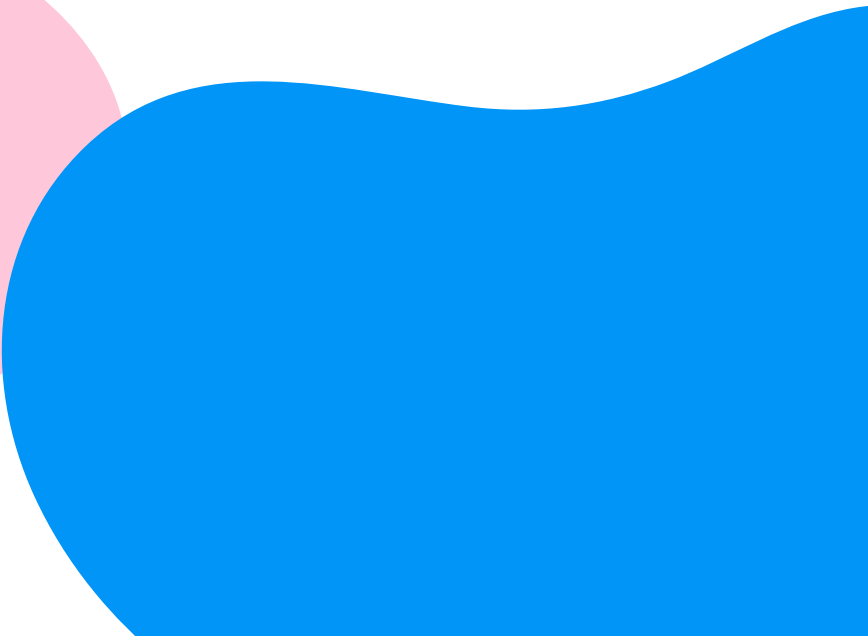
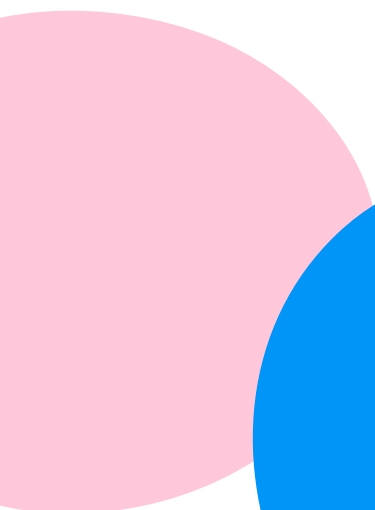




Sue Ryder

**Because no one
should face death
or grief alone**

Learning to live with grief



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**“
Grief is a normal and
natural reaction to loss.
We all experience it at
some point in our lives.
”**

Introduction

The death of someone close to you can be overwhelming, and you may feel a mixture of emotions. It's important to know that there is no 'standard' way of experiencing loss and no 'right' way to grieve. This leaflet suggests some different ways to cope, and how to find support if needed.

How you might be feeling

We are all different and every person's experience of grief is different. It's very common to feel shock, guilt, anger, relief, despair and many other different emotions.

Your feelings will be influenced by many different things, including your relationship with the person, your personality, your values and beliefs, and your circumstances. The important thing is to accept that it is ok to have these feelings and that grieving is a process we all have to learn to live with when someone dies.

It's also very common to experience physical symptoms at a time of grief.

You might have difficulty sleeping, lose your appetite, feel anxious and/or stressed, feel drained and lacking energy, and pick up minor bugs and illnesses. We often tell people they need to look after themselves, but when you are grieving it is really important to treat yourself kindly and to give yourself the time, space and care that you need.



When will I feel better?

You may feel as if you are on an emotional rollercoaster where one minute you are coping and the next you feel overwhelmed by grief. There is no timetable for how long you will grieve, and the length of time is different for everyone. For most people, it is a long process, but over time your feelings of grief and loss will become less. Slowly you will become more familiar with the emotions you are learning to live with.

“

There is no timeline for how long grief lasts, or how you should feel after a particular time. Every person's experience of grief is different.

”

Will I ever feel like myself again?

Sometimes, when you are grieving, it can feel as if you will never feel like yourself again. Often your daily life and activities are disrupted because the person who has died has been a part of it. Some of the hardest things can be simple, everyday activities that remind you of your loss. Learning to build a new 'normal' for yourself and finding new meanings in your activities and roles is part of the process of learning to live with grief.

When someone dies you may find that you are rebuilding your own identity. This can feel like a very hard thing to do, particularly as some of your friendships and relationships may change. You may be surprised by some of the people who might provide support and comfort to you as you adjust.

Rebuilding your life in this way can be slow. You might feel overwhelmed by grief and not able to face anything new, but over time your life will regain shape and meaning.

Finding a new balance does not mean that there is no place in your life for the person who has died. The bond you had with them will continue, and lots of people, particularly if it is their partner who has died, carry on talking to the person. This is a normal and healthy response to the death of someone you are close to. Sometimes having a particular routine or ritual can help you to reconnect with them, such as visiting the place where their ashes are scattered, or going on a walk that you did together.

“

It's the unpredictable things that take me by surprise, like a song on the radio or the smell of his aftershave, that can trigger unexpected feelings and emotions.

”

How can I cope?

Nobody knows you better than yourself, and you will find your own unique ways of coping. But looking after your physical health is always an essential part of getting through difficult times. Getting enough sleep and eating properly can help you deal with the different emotions you are feeling.

For some of us, keeping busy and throwing ourselves into different activities can help. If that helps you, try to do things even if you don't feel up to it. Others find they need to take things more slowly and take time out of their day-to-day life and activities.

Lots of people find walking really helpful as it gets you out of the house, provides some physical exercise, and can help you to think differently. Sometimes, particularly if you're feeling lonely, it can be good to see other people out and about, even if you're not ready to engage with them.

Most people find it helps to talk through their feelings. You may find it enough to talk with family or close friends, or you may find counselling either one-to-one or in a group helpful. People who have lost a partner can find it particularly helpful to go to a group and talk to other people in the same situation. On the other hand, you may feel that you don't want to talk, in which case it is important to find other ways to manage your feelings.

“

I still talk to her, sometimes. Sat in my chair after work with a cup of tea, we used to talk about our day and plan our evening. I still need to run through my plans with her. Sometimes I tell her about our friends and how they're getting on. It really makes me feel better.

”

Sometimes people's different ways of coping can create tensions and strains within a family, as different family members may have different ways of grieving. Perhaps one person wants to talk about and share their feelings, but another person does not want to talk and prefers to busy themselves with activities. When this happens you need to try to find a way to be sensitive to each other's needs, whilst coping with your feelings in your own way.

Important dates such as birthdays, wedding anniversaries and festivities, can be particularly hard. It normally helps if you can think beforehand about what you will do and what will help you get through the day. Some people like to create a tradition, such as visiting the person's grave, or the place where their ashes are scattered. There is no right or wrong thing to do on these different occasions, you only need to do the things that are important to you and help you to cope.



**“
It’s comforting to
know that you’re
not alone.
”**



Where can I find support?

Connecting with people around you and in your local community can be a really good place to find support.

The ways we can help include:

- our Online Bereavement Community, a place to connect with others who have been bereaved, share experiences and get support.
- our online Grief Guide, which contains lots of useful self-help resources to help you understand and cope with grief.
- our online resources, including videos and podcasts, which help everyone to support people experiencing grief.
- our Online Bereavement Counselling Service, which provides free, confidential and professional support.*

Visit sueryder.org/support

You must be 18+ and living in the UK to access our bereavement support services.

* Subject to eligibility.

Organisations you may find helpful

For adults

GOV.UK

Gives information about registering a death, Wills, benefits and lots more.

Visit [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk)

Citizens Advice

Provides information on financial support and bereavement benefits.

Visit citizensadvice.org.uk

Acas

For information related to bereavement support in the workplace.

Visit acas.org.uk

Samaritans

Provides emotional and crisis support 24 hours a day. Call **116 123** or visit samaritans.org for more information.

Shout

If you need to talk about how you're feeling, Shout offers text-based support 24/7 to anyone in crisis. You can text **SHOUT** to **85258** and talk to them about anything.

Contact your GP or NHS Mental Health Services for additional support.

Visit nhs.uk/mental-health

For children and young people

Child Bereavement UK

Our partnership with Child Bereavement UK ensures no one has to face grief alone, whatever their age.

Find support for bereaved children at **childbereavementuk.org**

Childhood Bereavement Network

Information and guidance for people supporting bereaved children. Visit

childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

Grief Encounter

Helps children through bereavement.

Visit **griefencounter.org.uk**

Childline

A free, confidential service open 24 hours a day, seven days a week for children to talk about their feelings or concerns. Visit **childline.org.uk** or call **0800 1111**

Papyrus

Papyrus provides help for young people up to the age of 35 at risk of suicide.

Visit **papyrus-uk.org**

Call **0800 068 4141**

Text **88247**

Email **pat@papyrus-uk.org**



Information is accurate at the time of printing (March 2026).

Sue Ryder is alongside people through terminal illness, death and grief. We provide expert palliative and end-of-life care and grief support, offering hope, dignity, and kindness.

For more information

visit: sueryder.org



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[@SueRyderCharity](https://www.instagram.com/SueRyderCharity)

This document is available in alternative formats on request.

We would welcome your feedback on this leaflet. To get in touch please email comments@sueryder.org

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