

# Bereavement and Grief



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**Bereavement** is usually spoken about in the event of a death and follows on from change and loss. We all take things for granted - it's human nature. It may be a person you love or someone special to you, we all do. But when you lose someone you love, it hurts. For some it is harder than others, but that's because we can all experience the same situation and react completely different. We may blame or punish ourselves or others, we may breathe a sigh of relief, we may get angry. These are all human reactions to losing someone you care about and we cannot judge ourselves for something that is out-with our control. What we can do, is be aware of our actions.

When you first experience loss, it can feel unbearable. You can't believe or even fathom that some day they would be gone. A light had gone out that would never go back on again. Someone who had meant the world to you, gone. In my situation I knew it was going to happen soon, but it didn't feel real. I remember my family sitting me down to tell me what had happened, my heart sank to the pit of my stomach. I was angry at the people who got to say goodbye. I blamed myself because I didn't know who else to blame. But the tragic fact that it was no one's fault. So, I was left with all these feelings, lost. I didn't attend the funeral, I didn't say goodbye, I never did - because if I didn't say goodbye, it wasn't real.



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But sometimes we must acknowledge the facts, ride through the pain and find some sort of peace, whatever that means for you. They may be gone, but they forever live on in our memories, thoughts and hearts. It's important to say goodbye, even if it's in your own way, because grieving is fundamental in giving you the strength to carry on. You can do this, you can get through this and if you need support, Mindspace is here for you. It may feel like you will never be ready to talk about it, but I can assure you bottling all your emotions up will not make you feel better in the long run. So accept support where it is offered, source it if it's not, and choose that path to living again.

Because, as we know, life's too short.

When grieving there are usually stages which make up the 5 stages of grief/loss.

These 5 stages are as follows...

1. Denial and isolation
2. Anger
3. Bargaining
4. Depression
5. Acceptance



People who are grieving don't always go through these stages in sequential order or go through all of them entirely.

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## Denial and isolation

As I said earlier "Because if I didn't say goodbye, it wasn't real". This was me in my first stage of grief - I didn't want to acknowledge the passing of my loved one, I didn't want to believe they were gone. This was my defense mechanism against the pain. I blamed and isolated myself as I thought it was in some way my fault and I had no one else to blame. Everything was surreal, some describe their experience as they go into autopilot. To help with this stage maybe you could make a memory book of pictures to remember them or write them a letter.

## Anger

I was angry with myself, but I also was angry with others because they got to say goodbye and I didn't. Anger comes when you come out of denial and the painful reality sets in. Let yourself feel those emotions, it may be painful, but it will pass. Try writing down how you are feeling- it may help to clear your mind of negative thoughts.

## Bargaining

This was my attempt to 'play God'. All of the what ifs and buts and what they could've done or we should've done. It doesn't make us feel any better. Try incorporating mindfulness into your routine, it really helps to notice these unhelpful thoughts and to help us give them less power, by not giving them attention.

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## Depression

This was my biggest and longest step, the depression. "There are two types of depression that are associated with mourning. The first one is a reaction to practical implications relating to the loss. Sadness and regret predominate this type of depression. The second type of depression is more subtle and, in a sense, perhaps more private. It is our quiet preparation to separate and to bid our loved one farewell." This really helped me to understand the way I was feeling, and why I was feeling this way. I felt numb and wanted to just hide away from the world, but I learnt it was okay to release those emotions, its natural to feel this way. Try developing a self-care routine, you must try and look after yourself or even making a sensory box to help settle anxious thoughts.

## Acceptance

This stage is a different in the way not everyone comes to experience, acceptance. This doesn't mean you are happy and no longer feel denial or depressive thoughts. This is where some people find their peace/calm with themselves, can be mindful of their feelings and experience healing.

**So my advice to you is to take time, no one can tell you how long it will take to grieve and to be gentle and kind to yourself.**

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## Services for Support

### **Mindspace Counselling Service**

18 - 20 York Place

Perth

PH2 8EH

01738 631639

[info@mindspacepk.com](mailto:info@mindspacepk.com)

### **Mindspace Recovery College**

18 - 20 York Place

Perth

PH2 8EH

01738 639657

[admin@mindspacepk.com](mailto:admin@mindspacepk.com)

### **Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland**

29 Barossa Place

Perth

PH1 5HH

0845 600 2227