



BEREAVEMENT



Feelings:

As well as the practical issues, the death of someone close brings a whole range of feelings and emotions. While each person's grief is different, in this handout we offer some general thoughts about how to manage those feelings and to begin to come to terms with what has happened.

Dealing with your feelings:

As you try to cope with the emotional upheaval of a death, the following thoughts may be helpful:

Take your time:

You may feel numb, or find it difficult to believe what's happened. You may feel relief that the person is no longer suffering or you might find yourself feeling sad, angry or guilty. You may also feel panicky about what needs to be done, or about what lies ahead. It's important, especially in the first few days, that you allow yourself:

- time to take in what has happened
- time to talk about the person who has died
- time to feel the pain and the loneliness
- time for yourself

Do it your way:

We're all different, and we react to death in different ways. There's no right or wrong way to grieve. Just try to do what feels right for you.

Take care of yourself:

It's important to look after yourself. For example, you should try to eat well, and avoid drinking too much alcohol. It's also important to know that it's normal to feel afraid, have nightmares or struggle to see the point of life. However, if you are worried about your feelings, you can speak to your doctor, or contact SIX MHS.

Remember:

- Grief is normal, it's part of what it is to be human and to have feelings.
- Grief is a journey, it is often hard, but it will get easier.
- Grief has no shortcuts, it takes time, often much longer than you and many people around you expect.
- It's normal both to grieve and live. Remember it's ok to find yourself *not* thinking about the person who has died.
- Grief can be scary, can lead to depressing thoughts and even thoughts of suicide. While it's not unusual to think this way, it's good to talk to someone about these feelings.

Finally, it's important not to expect too much of yourself, and to know when to ask for help. The death of someone close is a major event in anybody's life and there are no quick ways to adjust.

It can be helpful to find someone you trust that you can talk to, for example a friend, your doctor, or a religious leader.

Find out more:

Refer to the SIX MHS Trauma & Bereavement Booklet for more information. If you haven't received a hard copy, you can view and download the booklet from the SIX MHS App.



You can also call SIX MHS: 0800 880 7373
Or email us: helpline@sixmhs.com
for advice and support.





TRAUMA



What is Trauma?

Trauma: A powerful emotional response to a distressing event, such as war, an accident, the unexpected loss of a loved one, or abuse. Trauma can continue to cause both emotional and physical symptoms for many years after the event has concluded.

How You May Feel:

It is very common to experience distress following a traumatic event. In most cases, the emotional reactions get better over the days and weeks that follow a trauma. You may feel a wide range of emotions, including:

- **Anger** – in relation to what happened to you, and other people involved.
- **Guilty** – you think you could or should have done something to prevent what happened (that you may feel you were to blame), or that you survived when others suffered or died.
- **Frightened** – that the same event may happen again or that you feel you are unable to cope with your feelings. You may feel that you are not in control of what is going on in your life.
- **Helpless** – that you were unable to do something about what happened.
- **Sad** – that the trauma happened or that someone was injured or killed, especially if you knew them.
- **Ashamed or Embarrassed** – by what has happened and that you feel you cannot tell anyone about it.

In some cases the effects of a trauma can be longer lasting and continue for months and even years after the event. Receiving the appropriate type of support can help you come to terms with the traumatic experience so that it does not continue to affect you for the rest of your life.

What can you do?

- At the beginning it is a good idea to allow yourself time to adjust and to come to terms with what has happened. You may need to grieve for someone who died and process what has happened to you.
- It can help to find out more details of what happened and, where relevant, to talk through the event with other survivors and discuss the feelings you have.
- When you are ready, talking through the event with a supportive family member, friend or colleague can be helpful.
- Try and get back into a routine with yoursleep and eating.
- People can sometimes use alcohol or other drugs to temporarily self-medicate. However, this isn't a long term or healthy solution and we would recommend seeking help from a health professional for alternative approaches.
- If you identify particular times in the day that are more distressing, it could help to try and distract yourself at these times. Ideas include: *Mindfulness and breathing techniques, listening to music, doing exercise, playing a game or doing a hobby, writing down what you are thinking or feeling.* You don't have to suffer in silence.

Find out more:

Refer to the SIX MHS Trauma & Bereavement Booklet for more information. If you haven't received a hard copy, you can view and download the booklet from the SIX MHS App.

We offer specialised treatment approaches via our network.

- Trauma informed psychotherapy
- CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy)
- EMDR (Eye movement desensitization and reprocessing)
- Bereavement/complex bereavement therapies



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