



Grief and bereavement during the COVID-19 pandemic

Supporting yourself and others



If you have lost a loved one during the COVID-19 pandemic, there are helpful resources and support information is available.

Visit: www.pha.site/covid19-bereavement

This month's Newsletter is therefore in two parts; with the concluding [part 2](#) which involve skills will be in the May's edition.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 says, Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.



It is very important that those who are grieving the loss of loved ones are supported, especially in the current climate of pandemic where people are

grieving in isolation. The Bible tells us that we should "Share each other's burdens, and in doing this, we obey the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2).

Supporting the bereaved person during COVID 19 pandemic

The Bereavement Café is aware that because of the COVID 19 pandemic, it is not possible to offer the same level of support to the bereaved in the way we would normally do. However, due to recent government guidelines, we're now able to provide support not only by telephone or other social media, but we can also meet with the bereaved person in a safe environment to offer support.

The Bereavement Café is suggesting that you take care and use wisdom if you decide to meet with those who are grieving face-to-face. Remember that COVID is very much around and it does not discriminate who it attacks.

These are important to keep you safe!



What is Grief?

According to Norman Wright, “It’s called grief – the walk through the valley of shadows. It’s a journey that is imposed upon us. It’s not one of choice. We can fight it, struggle through it, or embrace it.

Another writer describes grief as, a combination of sorrow, strong emotions, and the confusion that comes from the passing of someone you love and is important you. In some cases, grief is a very intense emotional suffering caused by the passing or loss, disaster, misfortune.



A Thought

It is a natural response when we know someone is upset to want to fix things for them. Following the death of loved one, however, the reality is that we

can’t ‘fix’ their grief. There is nothing you can say that will make a bereaved person feels better about their loss; but there are things we can do to support for them during this difficult time (Better Health).



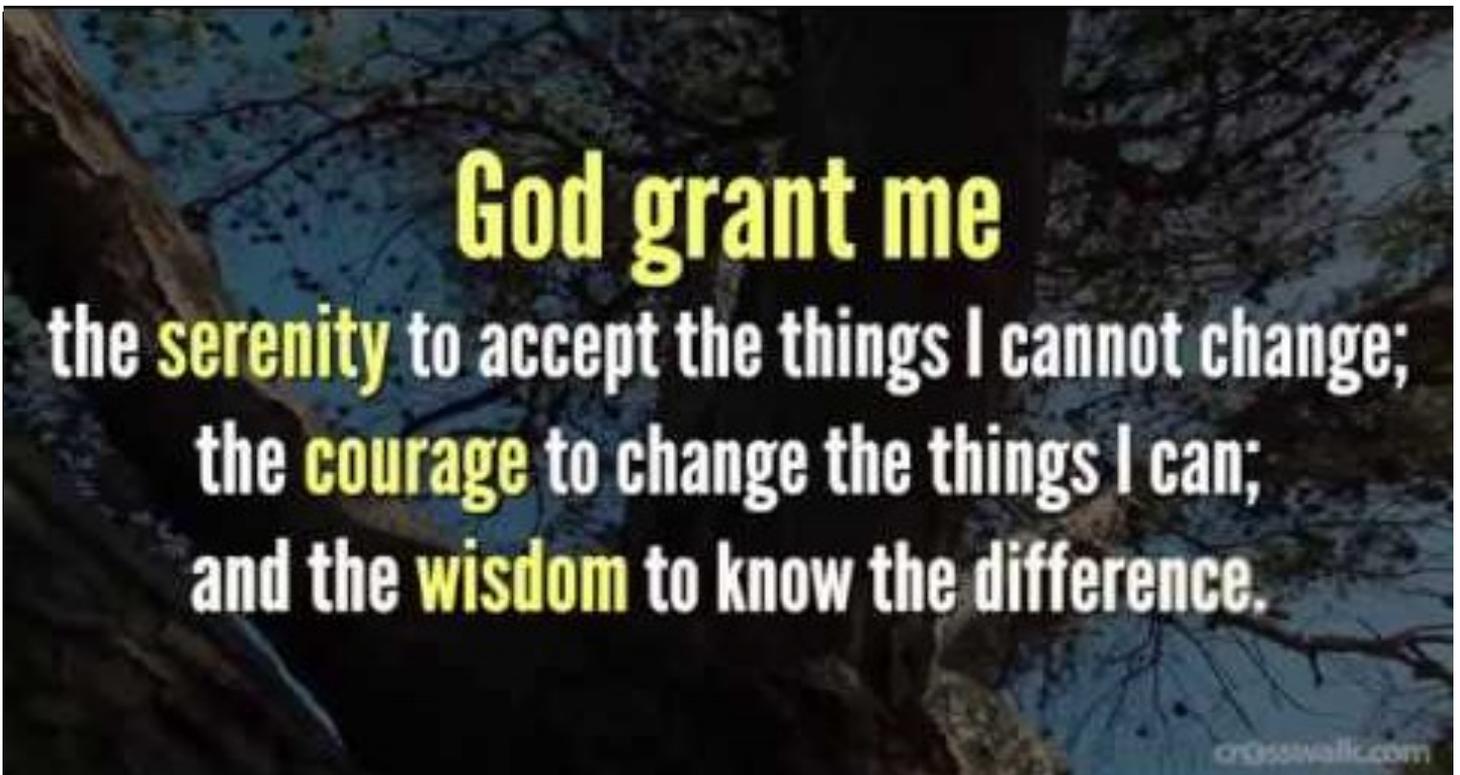
A Prayer

Abba Father, I thank You for providing people to weep with me (Romans 12:15). Thank You Lord for surrounding me with Your goodness and mercy even today as I grieve (Psalm 23:6). I trust that You are my source of joy and I will not weep forever Psalm 30:5). Today, I’m thankful Lord, that You have not hidden Your face from me. Thank You for hearing me when I cry to You (Psalm 22:24). I’m grateful my God that You know what I need before I ask You (Matthew 6:8). Thank You for being my strength and my shield (Psalm 28:7); and Lord, I thank You for allowing me to cast my anxieties on You (1 Peter 5:7).

Thank you my Father for hearing and answering my prayer in Jesus Name.
Amen.



Scripture verses for a grieving heart
John 16:22



“So also you have sorrow now, but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.”

- This verse reminds us that yes, we will experience tough times now, but we can cling to the joy that God gives because one day we will be reunited with Him and our loved ones!

Revelation 21:4

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

In heaven, there will be no more pain, sickness, and most importantly death. Jesus said he will wipe away every tear! What an amazing promise to put your hope in (Word of Life Bible Ministry).



Supporting those who are bereaved

According to one writer, if you're supporting someone who is grieving, allow them to express his/her grief, to cry, to be angry, to be sad, and to struggle. Also, allow him or her to laugh and have fun without feeling guilty. Though emotions are sometimes muted during times of grief, all of our emotional range is still present.

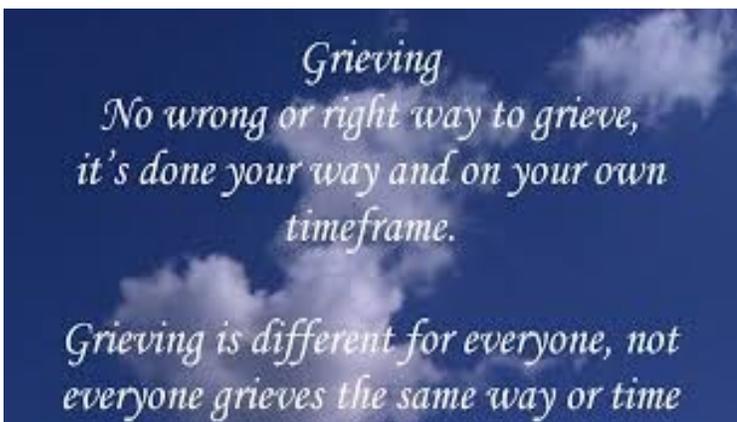
Sometimes grieving people need a break from focusing on their loss. Maintaining some normalcy as well as some light-heartedness can be helpful. Simply be available and present, listen to the bereaved person, and seek to love and support them right where they are.

Understanding the grieving process

When we are supporting those who grieve, it is always useful to have an understanding of the grieving process as this helps in providing an even more effective support to the bereaved person. For example:

Each person will cope in their own way and it is important to know that there is no 'correct' way to grieve.

There is no set timetable for grieving



Remember that grief may involve extreme emotions and behaviour

Four Tasks of Mourning

Psychologist J. W. Worden also created a stage-based model for coping with the death of a loved one. He divided the bereavement process into four tasks:

Task 1: To accept the reality of the loss

Task 2: To work through the pain of grief

Task 3: To adjust to life without the deceased

Task 4: To maintain a connection to the deceased while moving on with life

Offering practical support:

- When you are out shopping or shopping on line, you could buy a few essential things for the bereaved person and drop them off (you should check with him/her first).
- You could prepare meals that only need to be reheated before serving.
- Accompany him/her on a short walk (maintain social distancing).
- Share an enjoyable activity (sports, games, puzzles, art project) via zoom.
- Sending encouraging words by text messages



Remember however, that the bereaved person might not want you to make too much fuss and therefore this should be respected.

Some things to consider

According to "MIND" when offering support, you should consider the following:

Acknowledge the loss and don't avoid contact.

Consider how best to be in contact.

Talk about the person who died.

Focus on listening

Focus on the bereaved person.

Another writer reminds us that, we cannot fix the bereaved person's pain but we can make it a little

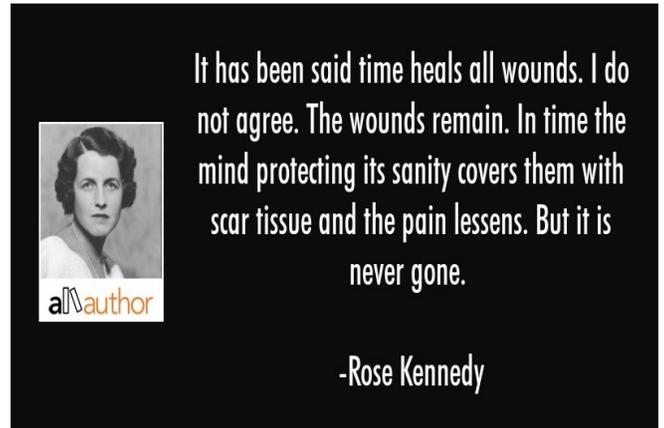
less lonely by listening or asking more about the person, and what has happened, and allowing them to talk. Many people can find this challenging to do. However, just by listening and allowing someone to share their feelings with you, can make a real difference.



Remember also to listen with interest even though the bereaved person might tell their story repeatedly.

Be mindful of clichés

- The bereaved person's deep and extremely complicated feelings of the loss of a loved one is often dismissed with overly simple, empty phrases such as:
- Tell them it's time to move on, they should be over it.
- At least he/she is no longer suffering
- Keep busy!
- No sense in dwelling in the past.
- You've got to pull yourself together and be strong.
- It's time to move on.
- He/ she wouldn't want you to be sad.
- Time heals all wounds.
- He/she is happy in heaven



Remember that your “words although well-intended, can hurt the bereaved person’s feelings because they take away the right for them to mourn”.

Don't use religious clichés either

- People who are supporting the bereaved person sometimes use theologise clichés in an attempt to comfort him/her for example:
- It was God's will
- God only gives you what you can handle
- He/she is at peace, a better place
- Thank God, they're no longer suffering.
- Now you have an angel in heaven

Like other clichés, these expressions tend to minimised the bereaved person's loss (Allan D. Wolfelt).

Remember that the bereaved person may have faith, but still needs to mourn the loss of their loved one.



Approaches to avoid

- Comparing their grief with yours or anyone else's
- Telling them about your grief experience instead of listening to them.
- Giving them unsolicited advice about how they can best get over their grief.
- Reasoning with them about how they should or shouldn't feel.

Remember that when we're supporting others in time of grief, we should be mindful not to impose our own thoughts, feelings, and ideas of what would be best for him/her. It has been suggested that "mouths closed, ears open, presence available" is the most effective help that can be offered to the bereaved in their journey of grief.

Listen!

- Don't interrupt: "be quick to listen, slow to speak"
- Let them unload as you listen to them & to the Lord

Please note!

If you're supporting the bereaved person and you can see that they are showing signs that they're not coping and in need of help beyond what you're offering, please advise him/her to seek professional help either through their GP or counselling support (see list of contacts below).

"The one who
blesses others
is abundantly
blessed..."

PROVERBS 11:25 The Message



Be blessed; Stay safe

The Bereavement Café

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

Useful Information and resources



Resources on Grief

you can find most of the books below on Amazon

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/>

- Norman Wright – Experiencing Grief
- Malcolm Duncan – Good Grief
- Mary Williams and Steve Fraser – Someone has died suddenly
- Kathleen O'Hara – **A Grief Like No Other: Surviving the Violent Death of Someone you Love**
- Pam Vredevelt – Empty Arms: Hope and Support for Those Who Have
- Suffered a Miscarriage, Stillbirth, or Tubal Pregnancy

Useful Contacts

- Samaritans Helpline: **08457 909090**
24 hours a day
- Cruse Bereavement Care: 0808 808 1677
- Bereavement Trust Helpline: 0800 435 455, from 6-10pm
- Association of Christian Counsellors (ACC)
- On the website- Homepage (ACC), Click on 'Find a Counsellor', then scroll down the page and enter your postcode for a list of counsellors in your area. You could Telephone 024 7644 9694 and someone will guide you through the process.
- www.wntcg.org/bereavement
- www.wntcg.org/care

Young People -Bereavement services/Emotional support

Grief Encounter

- Provides support to children and families who have been bereaved via phone, online chat and email.
- You can also take part in group activities with likeminded families at their Fundays, Grief Groups and Remembrance Days.
- Phone open Monday-Friday 9am-9pm: 0808 802 0111
- Online chat
Email: griefftalk@griefencounter.org.uk

Winston's Wish

- Provides support to bereaved children, families and any adults supporting a young person through bereavement.

- Open Monday-Friday 9am-5pm.
- Phone: 08088 020 021
- Email: ask@winstonswish.org

Their [online chat](#) service provides support directly to young people. Open Fridays 10am-1pm.

Cruse Bereavement Care

- Provides support to anyone affected by bereavement.
- Helpline open Monday-Friday 9.30-5pm, with extended hours on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings when they're open until 8pm. Phone 0808 808 1677

