

## Bereavement Help Sheet

Bereavement is a process or transition in which a person moves through a number of stages. These stages happen at varying speeds and intensity depending on the individual. It is important to remember that this process is not always linear. Some days will be good and some days will be not so good. It is important to allow yourself time to grieve for the loss, the pain experienced when bereaved is very real and it's useful to remember that crying is ok. Allow yourself time to accept the loss, feel the pain, talk about it, take things one day at a time and remember to look after yourself. Eat well, rest, take time to withdraw and time to talk with others. Try not to isolate yourself.

If you are struggling coming to terms with a loss, some of the following organisations and websites may be helpful.

Cruise offer information, advice and counselling following all types of bereavement

**Web:** [www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk](http://www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk) **Tel:** 0844 477 9400 **Email:** [helpline@cruse.org.uk](mailto:helpline@cruse.org.uk)

BBC Health has a number of articles online relating to bereavement and what you can expect

**Web:** [http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/emotional\\_health/bereavement/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/health/emotional_health/bereavement/)

Bereavement Advice Centre offer online advice and a free helpline:

**Web:** <http://www.bereavementadvice.org> **Tel:** 0800 634 9494

Understanding that bereavement (or grief) is a process can help when in the initial stages. Below are some of the stages and associated feelings you can expect to go through.

**Stage 1 – Shock** involves feelings of numbness, denial, disbelief, hysteria and not being able to think straight. The shock reaction protects us from the initial loss and allows us to process the feelings slowly which helps us to cope.

**Stage 2 – Protest** is characterised by strong and powerful feelings including anger, guilt, sadness, fear, yearning and searching. This stage is the struggle between denial and acceptance.

**Stage 3 – Disorganisation** is the stage where the loss is accepted and is the low point where feelings of bleakness, despair, depression, apathy, anxiety and confusion are experienced. It is not uncommon for people to experience feelings of hopelessness within this stage.

**Stage 4 – Reorganisation** is the stage where a person comes to terms with the loss. It is a sense making process where people begin to move forward, adjust their lives and acquire more balance. This stage is often characterised by a remembering of positive happier times with the person or situation lost. People find that through-out this stage life can take on new meanings and their values or priorities change. (Adapted from. T, Powell (2009) The Mental Health Handbook. A cognitive Behavioural Approach. A Speech Mark Practical Resource)