

Bereavement during COVID-19 Pandemic

Being bereaved can be a very lonely time and at the moment many of us need to self-isolate so that we don't catch Covid 19, or pass it on to others and this can make losing someone we care about especially hard to bear. You may also lose someone you have worked with for many years and this might be equally hard to deal with.

Your feelings of loneliness and grief are likely to be stronger and you may have to stay by yourself in a place you shared with the person who has died. This can bring up painful memories which will be difficult to escape from. If you are living with family in the same house, you may be able to support each other. But because you are all grieving perhaps in different ways sometimes being together all the time can lead to feelings of stress or even to arguments.

It can also be harder to deal with your grief because it is overlaid with worries about Covid 19. If someone dies of the virus this could happen very quickly, leaving you no time to prepare yourself or others. You may be separated from your loved one who is dying and unable to share those last precious moments together or say goodbye. This might mean you have feelings of guilt or shock and you may even struggle to believe that it has really happened.

The continual updates in the media about Covid 19 can bring up difficult feelings and reminders of people you have lost in the past. It may also make you worry about your own health, or fear that you or a loved one might also die. If you find that you are reacting to the news reports, try to limit how many times a day/week you watch or listen to them.

How can you help to look after yourself?

- Keep in touch with friends and family by phone, text, email or social media.
- Look after yourself and get rest but try to keep to a regular routine so that you have tasks which will preoccupy and distract you.
- If you are able to get some fresh air and sunlight each day.
- Don't be afraid to ask for practical help if you need it.
- Remember it is normal to feel upset or that you are struggling to cope don't be critical of yourself.
- **Call Care first for support on the Freephone number provided by your organisation.**

How can you look after others?

- Let someone who is bereaved talk about how they feel and let them share memories of the person who has died.
- Encourage them to talk but also respect if they are unable to talk at present, not everyone can express themselves easily.
- Try to stay in contact with bereaved friends and family even if you cannot be with them in person.