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Northumbria Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Bereavement Service

Issued by Macmillan Support Services at
Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

A service helping to support people who have been bereaved

When someone dies, it can be one of life's most painful events. Most of us will be personally touched by death at some stage during our lives and the death of someone close to us may be the most devastating and overwhelming experience we may ever have.

Grieving following a loss is a natural process. It is not an illness but a normal and often painful journey during which the bereaved person adapts to living without the person who has died. There are no right or wrong ways to grieve. We all grieve in a very personal and individual way.

Many of us however, may be unprepared for some of the emotions we may experience, even when the death has been expected. Be assured that the feelings you may have are common and that you are not alone and that support is available.

What reactions may you experience?

Some common feelings that people experience are:

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|-----------|--------------|
| Shock | Helplessness |
| Disbelief | Sadness |
| Numbness | Anxiety |
| Anger | Loneliness |
| Guilt | Despair |

The shock and disbelief may make you feel completely numb and you may find it difficult to cry. Allow yourself time to grieve and adjust to your new situation, taking time before making any major decisions.

Many people choose to withdraw from social contact, feeling unable to face the outside world. You may feel like this, but grieving is difficult enough without having to do it all on your own.

Talking to someone about your experience and feelings may help. Family and friends may be a good source of support, although it can also help to talk to someone from outside of your social circle.

One to one support

One to one bereavement support is delivered by fully trained and supervised volunteers. Support is provided at an agreed time and place that is convenient to you. Planned visits last for approximately one hour and usually take place in your own home or at a community venue.

Bereavement volunteers provide confidential support during a difficult time in your life. This is an opportunity for you to share your thoughts and memories and may help you to adjust to living with the loss of your loved one. Support is provided on a short term basis.

Other support available

On-going support is available through our bereavement support groups, as well as other events, groups and services such as the befriending service.

People are also invited to our annual remembrance service held in partnership with a local church.

If you feel that you could benefit from support please speak to your GP or health care professional who will refer you to the service.

How to access the service

This is a free service that is available Monday to Friday 9am-5pm and excludes bank holidays. You can be referred by your GP, nurse, social and voluntary sector agencies. Referrals can be accepted via post or secure email and we aim to contact people within two weeks of receiving referral.

For further information please contact

Macmillan Support Services

North Tyneside

Macmillan Support Services
North Tyneside General Hospital
Rake Lane
North Shields
NE29 8NH

0191 293 4377
nhc-tr.Macmillanservicesnt@nhs.net

Northumberland

Macmillan Support Services
Nursery Park Primary Care Centre
Nursery Park Road
Ashington
Northumberland
NE63 0HP

01670 855533
nhc-tr.mssnorthumberlandreferrals@nhs.net

Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on **03 44 811 8118**.

Other sources of information

NHS Direct 111

NHS Choices

www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx

NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

www.nice.org.uk

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: **0800 032 0202**

Text: **01670 511098**

Email: northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk

Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

General Enquiries **03 44 811 8111**

www.northumbria.nhs.uk

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