



## Grief in the first few months



**Freephone Helpline: 0808 802 6161**

- Opening hours:
- Monday 9am-8pm
- Tuesday 9am-5pm
- Wednesday 9am-5pm
- Thursday 9am-8pm
- Friday 9am-5pm
- Closed Saturday and Sunday



**GriefChat service: [crusescotland.org.uk](https://crusescotland.org.uk)**

Opening hours: Weekdays 9am-9pm



**Email: [support@crusescotland.org.uk](mailto:support@crusescotland.org.uk)**



# About Us

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“Grief is a normal, natural human experience. You can, however, feel very far from ‘normal’ as you grieve and might even find yourself asking ‘is this normal?’”

“This booklet highlights some of the common experiences that many people experience when they are first bereaved – it seeks to help equip you as you manage your grief in a healthy way and also to know what support we are able to offer you alongside that.”

-Nicola Reed, Director of Client Services  
Cruse Scotland

## Who We Are

Cruse Scotland is a charity dedicated to helping people understand, process and navigate their grief.

Our free bereavement services are designed to ensure that anyone needing support receives the right help at the right time, building resilience and improving well-being at a time of great sorrow, stress and loss.

We believe that no one should struggle alone after the death of a loved one, so we are on a mission to reach everyone who needs us.

It doesn't matter how recent or long ago the death occurred, nor the relationship to the deceased. We have a range of services that can offer hope and support as you move forward in your grief journey.

# What is Grief?



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**Everyone experiences bereavement at some point in their life – whether it's the death of a parent, family member, friend or a child.**

Grief describes the feelings that we may have when someone close to us dies.

The death of someone close can be a shattering experience and whether the death has been sudden or expected, we can find ourselves confused by the mix, and strength, of emotions.

The early days following death can be a chaotic time as we try to come to terms with the death, and cope with the grief of other family members or friends. Along with this, we may also have to deal with all the practical issues.

There is no right way to grieve. Grief is very personal and even within a family, group of friends or colleagues, people can experience very different feelings and reactions to the same death.

At the same time, there are some experiences that are not uncommon and it can be helpful to know that others have shared these.

# What is Happening to Me?

All of the following are normal reactions to grief, it is important to identify problems and seek support where needed.

## Self Medicating

It may seem helpful to ease the pain of grief by self medicating with drugs or alcohol. However, this can make us more depressed, and it is easy to become overly dependent on them as an escape. If you are worried about this, speak with your doctor.

## Accidents

Because concentration is difficult, it may be that accidents are more likely. It is important to take extra care when driving, as well as simple tasks like making a cup of tea.

## Suicidal Thoughts

It is common to question the meaning of our own lives following a death, and thoughts of suicide are not unusual. However, if the thought persists, then speak with your doctor.

## Mental Health Concerns

Grief can make us more vulnerable to illnesses. This could be mental illnesses like chronic anxiety and depression. It can also cause a variety of physical symptoms, such as back pain and stomach upsets. If you experience any of these, speak with your doctor.

## Trouble Eating

Appetite may be reduced, or it may be just too much effort to make a meal. However, we need nourishment to continue to cope – even if it is just a healthy snack. Some people may “comfort eat” but this can also be unhealthy.

## Sleeping

Grief frequently disturbs normal sleeping patterns, and can bring unusual or disturbing dreams, and the lack of sleep can be exhausting. If this persists, then speak with your doctor.



# Recognising Feelings

The death of someone close can bring many different feelings and emotions. It is normal to experience some, or all, of the following..

## Sadness

- Deep and painful emptiness
- Feelings that cannot be put into words

## Helplessness

- Not knowing what's next
- Feeling that we cannot cope

## Loneliness

- Missing the person's physical presence
- Feeling that part of us has gone

## Relief

- That their suffering is over

## Disappointment

- At losing what might have been

## Disbelief

- That the death is real

## Gratitude

- For the good times together

## Guilt

- About things we could or should have done
- About how we feel

## Anger

- At what has happened
- At the person

## Fear

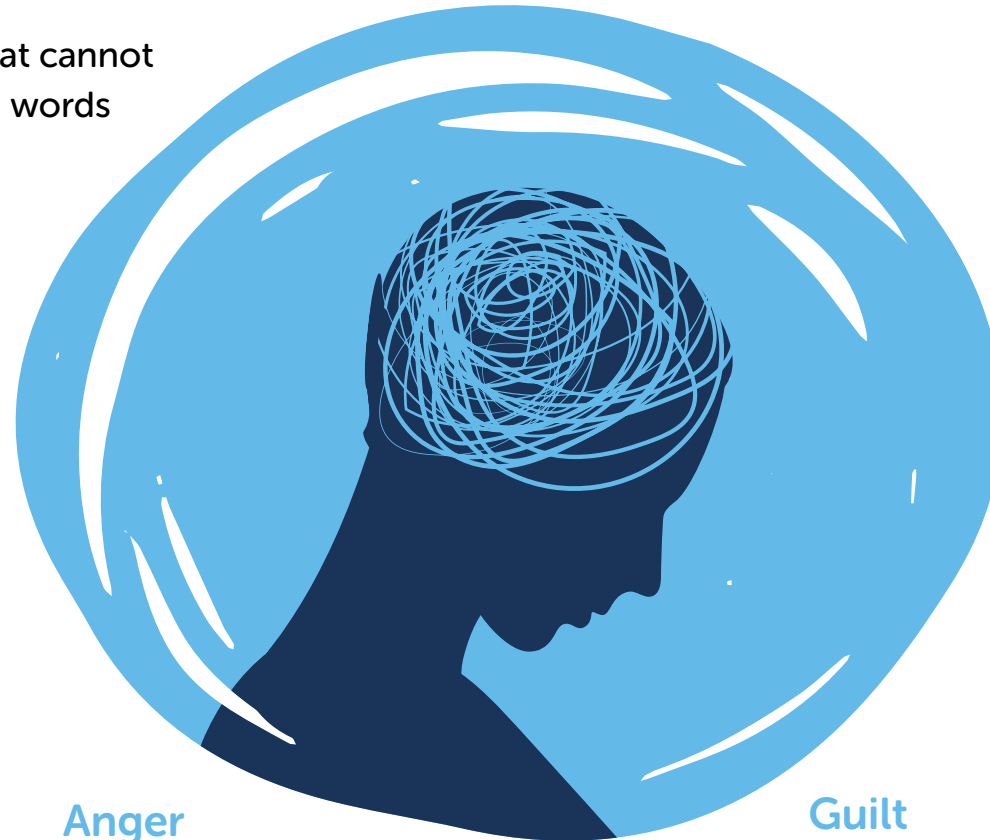
- Of what lies ahead
- About our own life or death

## Regret

- At things said or not said
- At things done

## Confusion

- Nothing makes sense
- Difficulty in concentrating



# Do I Need Help?

## Your pathway to support

“The first few months are often very chaotic with much emotional upheaval – this will usually change and settle as time goes on. Often the most effective support is from the connections that you already have around you – yourself, friends, family and colleagues. Where you are well supported, and allowed to grieve in a healthy way, you may find that external support is not needed.

Sometimes, however, that support network may not be as helpful as you need it to be and support from Cruse Scotland may be beneficial and our Helpline, GriefChat, and Early Support Sessions are all available. If, after reading through this booklet, you are concerned about your grief, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us to discuss the support best suited to your needs.”

-Nicola Reed, Director of Client Services  
Cruse Scotland



Please remember if you ever need to talk, immediate support is available:  
Our Free Bereavement Helpline, GriefChat and online self help materials.

## Immediate Support Services:

### Free Bereavement Helpline

0808 802 6161. We're here to listen and offer you bereavement support. Open Monday 9am-8pm, Tuesday 9am-5pm, Wednesday 9am-5pm, Thursday 9am-8pm, Friday 9am-5pm

### GriefChat

GriefChat is our online webchat service available on weekdays from 9am-9pm. Accessible via our website at '[crusescotland.org.uk](https://crusescotland.org.uk)'

## Appointment Based Services:

### Early Support Sessions

One to one sessions available to adults, any time from the day of a death to six months after. This can be a one-off session, or a short series of sessions, depending on each person's needs.

### Support Groups

Occasionally, we host support groups to help you connect with others who are grieving. Visit our website to learn more about upcoming events.

### Children and Young People Service

We offer a range of services to help children, whilst equipping their families, or carers, and schools with information and advice. All support is tailored to the needs of you and your child.

To find out more about all the services we offer visit: [crusescotland.org.uk/how-can-we-help](https://crusescotland.org.uk/how-can-we-help)

## Other Resources

These further resources may help you on your grief journey.

### Breathing Space

A service for people with low mood or depression.

0800 83 85 87

Weekdays: Monday-Thursday 6pm to 2am

Weekend: Friday 6pm-Monday 6am

[www.breathingspace.scot](http://www.breathingspace.scot)

### Samaritans

Need to talk to someone? Access Samaritans 24 hour service online: [www.samaritans.org.uk](http://www.samaritans.org.uk)

By phone: 116 123

### Mental Health - Need Urgent Help?

Phone 111. This service is available 24/7.

### Childline

Free support for children. 24 hour service.

Phone 0800 1111 or use their online chat.

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

## How Your Support Helps

We believe our vital bereavement support services should be free and accessible to all children, young people and adults who need us. However to make that possible, we need to raise money to be there for those struggling with their grief. There are many ways you can help us, including;

- Remembering Cruse Scotland in your Will. No matter the amount you leave, your legacy will be one of hope. Take advantage of our free Will writing service.
- Take on a challenge event in memory of a loved one. Whether you want to run or walk, get fit or have fun, there is something for everyone and we're here to support you with your fundraising efforts.
- Make a one off or regular donation

Visit [crusescotland.org.uk/support-us](http://crusescotland.org.uk/support-us) to offer hope to others.

