



# Bereavement, Grief and Loss

## What is it?

Bereavement is the process of coping with the death of a family member or close friend. If someone you know has died, you may need support and guidance.

Dealing with a death can be a stressful and distressing time. The grief you feel is normal, but it can impact your health and daily life. It's common to need time to process your emotions, and there are services to help.

## What will my GP do now?

Your GP will talk to you about how you're feeling, whether you're having trouble sleeping, and if you need extra support.

Your GP will also:

- Talk to you about the grieving process and normal reactions
- Give you support to help with the practical next steps, such as funeral arrangements and certificates
- Talk to you about medication if you are experiencing extreme distress
- Help you with any cultural, religious, or spiritual needs
- Help your relatives and close friends access support services

## What will my GP do in the future?

Your GP will want to see you regularly to talk about how you're feeling and coping.

At these check-ups, any medication you've been given will be reviewed. Your GP might also give you a referral for counselling if you haven't yet seen a counsellor.

## What questions could I ask my doctor?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Who can help me if I can't cope with daily life? | <input type="checkbox"/> Do I need medication?                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How long will it take me to feel better?         | <input type="checkbox"/> What can I do if I can't sleep?              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> What should I tell my family and friends?        | <input type="checkbox"/> What do I do if I am not feeling any better? |



## What can I do?

Dealing with the death of a loved one is a stressful time. There is no right way to handle the process of grieving. It will take time. Allow yourself to feel sad, and talk about your emotions with close friends and family members.

Keeping up a routine will help you get through the difficult days. Staying healthy and active can make you feel better, too. Try to sleep for eight hours every night, eat a healthy diet, and avoid alcohol and drugs.

Accept support, and tell your GP if you are struggling. Counselling can be helpful, but you may wish to wait a while before speaking to a counsellor.

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## What supports are available?

### Face-to-face support

The **South Western Sydney Local Health District Bereavement Counselling Service** provides counselling for families and close friends who live in the area. Phone **9616 8678**.

The **Sydney Children's Hospital** provides counselling for parents, siblings, and grandparents of children who have died at Sydney Children's Hospital or were known to the Palliative Care Service. Phone **9382 1726**.

The **Children's Hospital at Westmead** offers group and individual counselling for family members of any child known to the service. Phone **9845 0000**.

The **Integrated Support After Infant Loss Clinic** provides counselling for parents after a stillbirth or newborn death. Phone **9515 6677**.

If the death has been reported to the coroner, counselling services are available via the **Coroner's Court**. Speak to your GP about a referral.

Carers have access to short-term professional counselling and assistance to manage issues such as stress, loss and grief through the **National Carers Counselling Program**. Phone **1800 242 636**.

### Phone support:

- **Service NSW** — offers support for people who have lost a family member or close friend: phone 13 77 88 (24 hours, 7 days)
- **Bereavement Care Centre** — counselling and groups for children: phone 9869 3330
- **Leukaemia Foundation Grief Support**: phone 9902 2222
- **Lifeline**: phone 13 11 14 (24 hours)
- **National Association for Loss And Grief**: phone 8230 1527
- **The Compassionate Friends NSW**: phone 9290 2355
- **Solace** — support for widows and widowers: phone 9519 2820
- **Transcultural Mental Health Team** — bilingual counsellors: phone 9840 3800
- **Southern Highlands Bereavement Care Service**: phone 4862 1701
- **Quest for Life Foundation** — retreats for people in grief: phone 1300 941 488
- **Canteen** — one-on-one and group counselling: phone 1800 226 833
- **beyondblue**: phone 1300 224 636

### Emergency Support

For 24-hour emergency support, phone the Mental Health Line on **1800 011 511**

### Private support

Speak to your GP about a referral to a private psychologist or counsellor.

## Where can I learn more?

- **NSW Health** — a practical guide to coping with bereavement: [mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au](http://mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au)
- **NSW Paediatric Palliative Care Program** — information for patients, families, and health professionals who care for a child with a life limiting illness: [caresearch.com.au](http://caresearch.com.au)
- **Sands Australia** — miscarriage, stillbirth and newborn death support: [sands.org.au](http://sands.org.au)
- **Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement**: [grief.org.au](http://grief.org.au)
- **National Association for Loss and Grief**: [nalag.org.au](http://nalag.org.au)
- **Department of Human Services** — what to do following a death: [humanservices.gov.au](http://humanservices.gov.au)
- **South Western Sydney Local Health District**: [swslhd.nsw.gov.au](http://swslhd.nsw.gov.au)
  - **Understanding Grief**
  - **Coping with anniversaries, religious celebrations and special occasions**
  - **Children and Grief — information for caregivers**

This information is to be viewed by someone who has received a diagnosis from their doctor. It is not designed to be used to diagnose a condition or as a substitute for ongoing medical care

Health Resource Directory factsheets are endorsed by South Western Sydney PHN's Community Advisory Committee and local GPs

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