



## Take Care

Take one moment/day at a time

Allow yourself to mourn and cry

Keep time in your day to heal and reminisce

Eat well and be gentle with yourself

Change is difficult, everyone has to adjust

Allow each person to grieve in their own way

Remember talking helps

Express your feelings

## What Can Help?

You need to give yourself permission to grieve for as long as you need – even in the midst of family, friends and co-workers who may not understand, especially if they haven't "been there."

Because loss and grief are normal experiences in life, most people find their own way through the pain with support from friends and family.

Some people find it helpful to meet others who have been similarly bereaved and seek out bereavement groups in their community.

A small minority of people, for various reasons, can experience significant difficulties in their bereavement, and may need further support.

If we in Pastoral Care can be of assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Pastoral Care Department  
Telephone No: 01 414 2482

*(Cover photograph:  
Stained glass window by James Scanlon,  
representing Pain, Suffering and Loss.  
Hospital Chapel)*



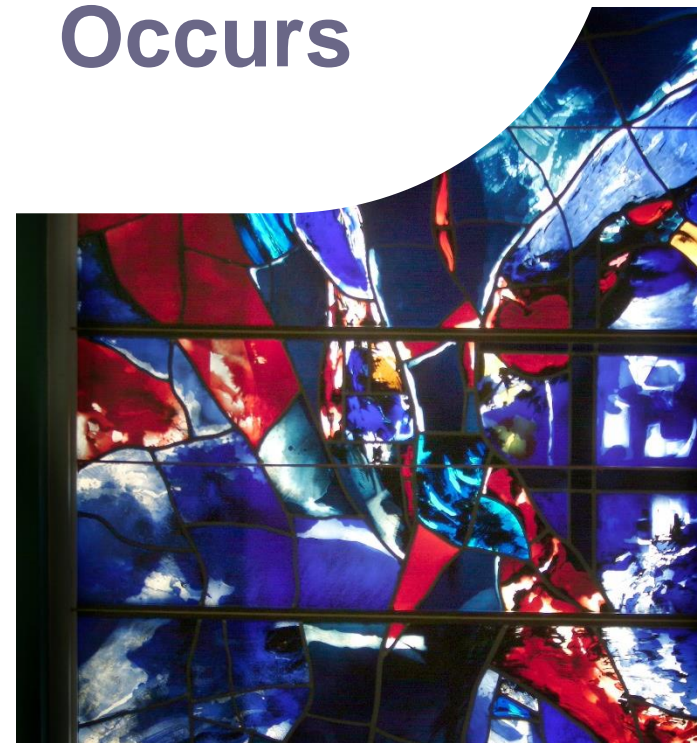
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# When a Death Occurs



## What is normal grief?



Grieving is a natural and healthy response to loss. The death of someone close is, for most of us, the greatest loss we will suffer in our lives. Making sense of that loss and learning to live in the world without that person is the work of grieving. Grief is a very complex process and affects everyone differently.

Grief involves a range of emotional, physical and spiritual responses, which you may not be used to dealing with. You may experience deep sadness and loneliness, when you long to see the person who has died and miss their physical presence. It is often difficult to put into words how painful the feelings of grief are and you may wonder if it will ever get any better. It is not uncommon to feel irritable and angry. The anger can be directed towards medical or emergency staff, God or even the person that died.

When someone close dies you may struggle to make sense of the experience. Each grief reaction is unique and it is impossible to know how you are going to be during the bereavement. It can challenge your faith. Many people will experience a changing relationship with God as they journey through bereavement.

Some of the Physical symptoms of grief are poor concentration. You can become absent minded, have difficulty sleeping, you may have vivid dreams when you do sleep, loss of appetite, and generally just feel out of sorts. Your body is trying to cope with the big changes in your life. Nobody can tell you how you are going to feel.

## The Family

When somebody in the family dies it affects the whole family. However, each person is grieving a different relationship with the deceased.

Everyone reacts differently to death and it is important to remember that there is no right or wrong way to grieve.

The family as a whole has to adapt to life without the person physically present.

The different roles people have in the family must change to take account of this. This adjustment is happening at the same time as family members are grieving and it can be a very emotional and tense time for everybody. This is normal and happens to all grieving families.

Families differ in how much they talk about sad and painful issues.

Some families find it very difficult to share their emotional journey with one another as they travel through bereavement.

It will be helpful if you can talk to other family members about your experience of bereavement, although it is important to remember that everyone in that family may be grieving differently.

## Children

Children grieve too when somebody dies. Their response will be appropriate to their age and it is important to understand this process. Very young children may not fully understand the concept of death, however they often understand much more than adults may realise.

Children need reassurance that they will be looked after and may ask repeated questions which need to be answered. They may experience intense outbursts of grief followed by periods when it appears that they are unaffected by the death. This is normal and can be expected. Grieving children may go back to behaving in a way typical of when they were younger. Other children may try to take more responsibility in the family than they should and this is something to be careful about.

Being honest with children is important. The more they understand the less they will fear, or experience anxiety. In facing your own grief openly with your children, you show them that it is all right to cry, to be sad, to be angry, to laugh and to use the person's name. A child's grief can be expressed positively through, for example, drawing, reading stories or even planting a tree. These expressions should be encouraged.