

Grief Support Guide

Finding the bereavement
support that's right for you



Finding the bereavement support that's right for you

Everybody's experience of grief is different and there is no 'right' way to grieve or cope. Following a bereavement, it is normal to experience a range of feelings as well as physical health symptoms.

People close to you may offer valuable practical support and talking to them can help you process the emotions of grief. However, many people need additional support during this difficult time.

What support is available and how can it help me?

There is a wide variety of support available, from self-help resources to support groups and formal grief counselling. Groups and services also exist for specific groups of bereaved people e.g. young widow(er)s, people who identify as LGBTQ+, cultural and faith groups, and people bereaved by certain types of death.

Bereavement support benefits people in different ways. It can help them to better understand their feelings, feel understood and connected with others, and develop their coping skills.

Individual needs and preferences for support vary, and may also change over time. It's important that you find what feels right for you, at the time that you need it. Sometimes this might mean trying different options to find one that works for you.

“

I think different options are best so people can explore for themselves.

BEREAVED PARTNER

”



This resource includes information on the following types of bereavement support, how to access them and the specific ways they can help:

- Practical support (e.g. with administrative tasks, funerals) ([p.4](#))
- Self-help resources (e.g. books, podcasts) and community support ([p.5](#))
- Helplines and instant-access web chat services ([p.6](#))
- Online bereavement community support ([p.7](#))
- Bereavement support groups ([p.8](#))
- One-to-one support (e.g. individual counselling) ([p.9](#))
- Supporting others who are grieving (including children) ([p.10](#))
- Services which specialise in support following specific types of death (e.g. illness, accident) ([p.11](#)) and for particular groups of people (e.g. children, widow(er)s) ([p.13](#))



This resource focuses on support following the death of a person, but if you have been affected by the death of a pet or companion animal, please visit www.bluecross.org.uk / 0800 096 6606 or www.compassionunderstood.com

We hope that this information will help you to understand more about the different support options available to you, where to go and who to contact if you are looking for additional support. Please keep this resource so you can refer to it in the future if needed – and know that it's never too late to seek support. If you are reading this as a paper version and would like to access the web pages listed in this booklet, you can download an electronic copy available at:

www.nationalbereavementalliance.org.uk/support



If you are concerned about your mental health, please speak to your GP.

If you've harmed yourself or you think you're about to harm yourself, call 999 or go to A&E.

24 hour support lines:

Samaritans 116 123 - for anyone at any time and for any reason

Childline 0800 1111 - support for people aged 18yrs & under and their relatives

Silverline 0800 470 8090 - support for people aged over 50

Practical information & support

Following a bereavement, there are many practical considerations and tasks that are required at different time points. Managing these alongside feelings of grief can be daunting, but help is available. The services listed on this page offer advice and information on:

- **Understanding what happens when someone dies, including registering the death and what happens with undertakers.**
- **Making funeral arrangements and organising memorials.**
- **Financial support and benefits entitlements.**
- **Managing wills and probates.**
- **Dealing with your loved one's estate and personal possessions.**

What happens when someone dies

Information and advice on a range of practical tasks:

www.gov.uk/when-someone-dies (includes access to Tell Us Once service)

National Bereavement Service: www.thenbs.org 0800 0246 121

www.bereavementadvice.org

www.citizensadvice.org.uk / 0800 144 8848 (England) 0800 702 2020 (Wales) 0800 028 1456 (Scotland) 0800 915 4604 (N. Ireland)

www.cruse.org.uk 0808 808 1677 (E, NI, W) www.crusescotland.org.uk 0808 802 6161 (Scotland)

Financial support

Depending on your circumstances, you may be eligible for financial support and certain benefits:

www.gov.uk/browse/benefits/bereavement

Turn2us: www.turn2us.org.uk/Your-Situation/Bereaved

Age UK: www.ageuk.org.uk/information-advice 0800 678 1602

Down to Earth: www.downtoearthsupport.org.uk 020 8983 5055 (funeral cost helpline)

Funerals and memorials

Information and advice on organising funerals:

www.sueryder.org

www.goodfuneralguide.co.uk

Sorting possessions

Advice on managing the practical and emotional challenges of sorting through possessions:

Practical advice: www.ataloss.org

Emotional advice: www.cruse.org.uk

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I've said to friends on more than one occasion what I need is a 'Death PA' who could arrange all this stuff, deal with the remaining paperwork & probate & house sale etc. and just update me. It's a massive task to do alone.

BEREAVED DAUGHTER

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Self-help resources and community support

Self-help resources and activities can help people to cope with their bereavement. Some of these are specifically aimed at bereaved people (e.g. grief-related books, podcasts, events), while others offer general support (e.g. mindfulness apps, creative courses, exercise and community or faith groups).

Resources and activities can help you:

- **Understand more about your own feelings and experiences by learning about grief and hearing other people's stories.**
- **Work through feelings of grief privately, at your own pace and at times that suit you.**
- **Develop your coping skills and support your wellbeing.**
- **Find ways to talk to your family and friends about your grief and feelings.**
- **Feel less lonely and more connected with others.**

Grief information:

Cruse Bereavement Support: www.cruse.org.uk

Sue Ryder: www.sueryder.org

Specialised grief information:

See p.11-12 (specific to type of death); p.13-14 (specific to who has been bereaved e.g. men, cultural and faith groups)

Details of books, podcasts, videos and apps:

Books and videos: www.thegoodgrieftrust.org

Podcasts: www.cruse.org.uk / sueryder.org

Online magazine: www.mariecurie.org.uk

Talks and interviews: The Grief Channel (features content from the The Good Grief Festival: www.goodgriefhub.org and www.youtube.com/@griefchannel)

Grief apps, courses, books and more: www.ataloss.org

Seeking help from friends and family:

www.happiful.com/how-to-ask-for-help-when-youre-struggling

“

It (the podcast) has been something I can listen to while out walking and hear other people's experiences. Helps me to process my own feelings and recognise that what I'm feeling is normal.

BEREAVED DAUGHTER

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“

As a family we have read the same books - it's quite helpful as they provide a framework / shared vocabulary.

BEREAVED BROTHER

”

“

I joined some webinars that really helped, and felt like I was nursing myself. I also did a couple of workshops about trauma, healing, and boundaries; again very helpful.

BEREAVED DAUGHTER

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Helplines and instant-access web chat services

Listening support and advice can be provided over the phone or through a messaging (text) service by a trained volunteer or professional. Volunteer support workers are extensively vetted and trained to a professional standard. You are likely to talk to a different person each time you get in touch.

Helplines and chat services can help you:

- **Access support whenever you need it, including at 'out of hours' times such as evenings and weekends.**
- **Talk openly and express your feelings without worrying about upsetting those close to you.**
- **Process your feelings and thoughts with someone who understands grief.**
- **Feel supported when waiting for, or taking a break from, other services such as counselling.**

Bereavement helplines:

Cruse Bereavement Support: 0808 808 1677

www.crusescotland.org.uk (Chat) 0808 802 6161 (Scotland)

Marie Curie Bereavement Line: 0800 090 2309

GriefChat: www.griefchat.co.uk/charity
(access through charity partners)

Specialised helplines:

See [p.11-12](#) (specific to type of death); [p.13-15](#) (specific to who has been bereaved, e.g. members of the LGBTQ+ community, children and young people)

For details of other helplines:

AtaLoss: www.ataloss.org

The Good Grief Trust: www.thegoodgrieftrust.org

“

Really helpful. I just needed to say it all aloud to someone and not worry about how it made them feel.

BEREAVED FRIEND

”

“

They let me type it out, talk about what was happening that night... they basically drove me out of a bit of a difficult grief wave... it was literally just knowing that somebody was there that was unattached to my situation.

BEREAVED WIFE

”

“

They were really non-judgemental and understanding. They helped normalise my feelings and didn't make me feel stupid for reaching out.

BEREAVED NIECE

”

Online bereavement community support

Informal peer support can be provided through online chat forums or specialised social media groups (e.g. Facebook). Some are hosted by established bereavement services, while others are run by people who have experienced bereavement themselves.

Online community support can help you:

- **Feel understood and connected with people who 'get it', including people with specific shared experiences (e.g. being widowed at a young age).**
- **Recognise and better understand your own feelings and experiences and that you are not alone in how you feel.**
- **Give and receive practical advice and learn how others cope.**
- **Support one another, make new friends and feel less isolated.**
- **Connect with group members at a time that works for you, without an ongoing commitment, or when waiting to receive other types of support.**

Online communities and forums:

Sue Ryder: www.community.sueryder.org
Cruse Bereavement Support: www.facebook.com/crusebereavementsupport

Specialised communities:

See p.11-12 (specific to type of death); p.13-15 (specific to who has been bereaved, e.g. young people, widow(er)s)

Covid19:

www.facebook.com/groups/covidfamiliesforjusticeuk

For details of other online community support:

AtaLoss: www.ataloss.org

The Good Grief Trust: www.thegoodgrieftrust.org



Please remember to be cautious with sharing personal contact details online.

“

Those from the Facebook group have made me feel less alone. They have offered advice from their own losses prior to mine. I have gained a friend of a similar age to me and realised we have endless similarities. It's been a relief to have found her as we are going through the same emotions during our day-to-day challenges.

BEREAVED DAUGHTER

”

“

I was able to express my emotions and feelings at that time with people who had gone through the bereavement process themselves... It also helped that I could offer some support however small to other people going through what I was going through.

BEREAVED SON

”

Bereavement support groups

Group based support may be hosted in your local community or through online platforms. Structured group support (e.g. group counselling) is usually led by a trained facilitator over a number of sessions covering different topics. Informal peer support groups (e.g. Grief Cafes, walking groups) are unstructured meetings, providing opportunities for bereaved people to meet and talk. Support groups can be accessed through charities (see below) and sometimes GPs, local hospices, hospitals and employers.

Support groups can help you:

- **Understand and make sense of your own feelings by talking with people who share similar experiences.**
- **Talk about your feelings and memories in a safe space, without worrying about how others will react.**
- **Have dedicated time to think about your grief – this may also help you to focus on other areas of your life at other times.**
- **Find comfort, connection and friendship with people who ‘get it’.**
- **Learn coping skills and strategies from group members and the content of structured programmes.**
- **Give and receive practical information and advice.**

Nationally available groups:

Cruse Bereavement Support (area-based):

www.cruse.org.uk 0808 808 1677

www.crusescotland.org.uk 0808 802 6161 (Scotland)

Virtual Grief Cafes (The Good Grief Trust):

www.thegoodgrieftrust.org

Grief Kind Spaces (area based): www.sueryder.org

Specialised groups:

See p.11-12 (specific to type of death); p.13-15 (specific to who has been bereaved, e.g. siblings and men)

For details of other local and national groups:

The Good Grief Trust: www.thegoodgrieftrust.org

AtaLoss: www.ataloss.org

“

Finding a group of people who have also lost their same sex partners felt like coming home... I was missing so much of the things we shared together in that world. This group share jokes, cultural references and experiences which feel so comfortable and familiar.

BEREAVED PARTNER

”

“

I enjoy this - I can choose to speak or simply to listen. It helps to know others are going through similar things and to find shared interests and support each other.

BEREAVED DAUGHTER

”

One-to-one support (e.g. individual counselling)

Individual/one-to-one support can be provided by a trained volunteer or professional counsellor. This usually takes place with the same person over a number of sessions. The amount of support given will depend on the provider's policies and/or how much support is needed, and may be delivered on the phone, online or in person. Some services may conduct an initial assessment to decide if grief counselling is the most appropriate option for you. Free counselling support can be accessed through charities (see below) and sometimes GPs, hospices, hospitals, employers and education providers.

One-to-one support can help you:

- **Explore your grief in a safe and understanding space, without worrying about how your friends or family may react.**
- **Develop your understanding of the grieving process – it can be reassuring to learn that your feelings are 'normal'.**
- **Work through difficult feelings such as guilt and anger with someone who is experienced in having these conversations.**
- **Have dedicated time to think about your grief – this may also help you to focus on other areas of your life at other times.**
- **Learn coping strategies and ways to manage emotional and practical challenges, for example: feelings of anxiety; communicating with family and friends; making decisions and looking ahead.**

National services:

Cruse Bereavement Support (area based):

www.cruse.org.uk 0808 808 1677

www.crusescotland.org.uk 0808 802 6161 (Scotland)

Sue Ryder (online counselling): www.sueryder.org

Specialised support:

See [p.11-12](#) (specific to type of death); [p.13-15](#) (specific to who has been bereaved e.g. cultural and faith groups, children & young people)

For details of local and other national services:

The Good Grief Trust: www.thegoodgrieftrust.org

AtaLoss: www.ataloss.org

Directory of private (fee-paying) therapists:
www.bacp.co.uk 01455 883300

“

Having a completely impartial person to talk to who won't judge what you say was a big relief and it really helped me to be able to start talking to friends and family too.

BEREAVED MOTHER

”

“

Weekly counselling gives me an anchor to my week. A safe space to connect with challenging feelings, say things some people might find hard to listen to. She wasn't emotionally connected to my partner so I don't have to take care of her grief.

BEREAVED PARTNER

”

“

Talking and being able to cry without embarrassment. Hearing that what I am experiencing is normal and the way I feel is ok.

BEREAVED HUSBAND

”

Supporting others who are grieving

Many people who are recently bereaved also find themselves supporting others who are grieving. This page includes information on resources which can help you find and provide appropriate support for other family members or friends.

Supporting children and young people

Children and young people can benefit from:

- **Open conversations about grief and opportunities to talk about and remember the person who died. Books, stories and other resources can help with this.**
- **School/college-based pastoral care and teacher support.***
- **Peer-support groups, by learning from others, and feeling part of a community.**
- **One-to-one support (e.g. counselling), by learning how to manage thoughts and feelings, and by developing practical strategies to remember the person who died.**

Resources and services:

www.childbereavementuk.org 0800 02 888 40

www.cruse.org.uk 0808 808 1677 (E, NI, W) www.crusescotland.org.uk 0808 802 6161 (Scotland)

www.hopeagain.org.uk (online community) 0808 808 1677

www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk (directory of child services)

*Many schools, colleges and universities also offer specialist emotional support/counselling services.

Resources for supporting other family or friends

Men:

Men can grieve differently to women and sometimes may be less likely to talk about their feelings or seek support. This blog provides information on supporting men who are grieving:

www.sueryder.org

People with learning disabilities:

www.ataloss.org

www.mencap.org.uk
0808 808 1111

www.sudden.org

People with Dementia:

www.alzheimers.org
0333 150 3456

www.ageuk.org
0800 678 1602

Older people:

www.ataloss.org

www.funeralguide.co.uk

For organisations providing specialised support to children, men and other groups

See p.13-15 'Examples of support specific to who has been bereaved'

AtaLoss: www.ataloss.org


The Good Grief Trust: www.thegoodgrieftrust.org



Death of an adult: Examples of specific support

Type of Death	Name of Service	Contact details	Self help sources	Helpline	Messaging support	Online bereavement community support	Group Support	One to one support
Illness	Marie Curie (terminal illness)	www.mariecurie.org.uk	Yes	0800 090 2309	Live web chat	Yes	In person locally	By telephone and in person locally
	Macmillan Cancer Support	www.macmillan.org.uk	Yes	0808 808 0000	Live web chat & email	Yes	No	No
	Loss Foundation (Cancer or Covid-19)	www.thelossfoundation.org 0300 200 4112	Yes	No	No	No	Online groups, social events & weekend retreats	Telephone befriending service
Sudden death	Sudden	www.sudden.org	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Suicide	Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide	www.uksoobs.org	Yes	0300 111 5065	Email	Yes	In person locally	No
	Support after Suicide Partnership	www.supportaftersuicide.org.uk	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Addiction related	DrugFAM	www.drugfam.co.uk	Yes	0300 888 3853	Email	No	In person locally	No
	Alcohol Change UK	www.alcoholchange.org.uk	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Stroke	Stroke Association	www.stroke.org.uk	Yes	0303 3033 100	Live web chat & email	No	No	No
Road crash, cycling and pedestrian accidents	Brake	www.brake.org.uk	Yes	0808 800 0401	Email	No	No	No
	Road Peace	www.roadpeace.org	No	0800 160 1069	Email	Yes	Locally and online	Telephone befriending service
Sudden violent death	SAMM National - Support after Murder or Manslaughter	www.samm.org.uk	Yes	0121 472 2912 Text chat: 07342 888570	No	Yes	In person focused weekends	Peer support online and by telephone
Domestic abuse	AAFDA - Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse	www.aafda.org.uk	Yes	07887 488 464	Email	No	Online	No

For more national & local services: www.ataloss.org or www.thegoodgrieftrust.org

 Death of a pet: For specific support visit: www.bluecross.org.uk / 0800 096 6606 or www.compassionunderstood.com

Death of a child: Examples of specific support

Type of Death	Name of Service	Contact details	Self help sources	Helpline	Messaging support	Online bereavement community support	Group Support	One to one support
Baby loss through miscarriage, stillbirth or shortly after birth	The Miscarriage Association	www.miscarriageassociation.org.uk	Yes	01924 200799	Live web chat and email	Yes	Online and in person locally	No
	Tommy's	www.tommys.org	Yes	0800 014 7800	Email	Yes	No	No
	Sands	www.sands.org.uk	Yes	0808 164 3332	Live web chat and email	Yes	Online and in person locally	No
	Petals	www.petalscharity.org	Yes	No	No	No	No	Online
Sudden death of a baby	The Lullaby Trust	www.lullabytrust.org.uk	Yes	0808 802 6868	Email	Yes	Local groups and social events	Telephone befriending service
Death of a child, including adult children	Child Bereavement UK	www.childbereavementuk.org	Yes	0800 02 888 40	Live web chat and email	Yes	Online and in person locally	Online, by telephone and in person locally
	The Compassionate Friends	www.tcf.org.uk	Yes	0345 123 2304	Email	Yes	Online and in person locally	Peer support online and by telephone
	Care for the Family	www.careforthefamily.org.uk	Yes	029 2081 0800	No	Yes	Online and in person events	Telephone befriending service
Illness in children	Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group	www.cclg.org.uk	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
	Young Lives Vs Cancer	www.younglivesvscancer.org	Yes	0300 303 5220	Live web chat	Yes	No	No
Sudden death of a child or young person	Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood	www.sudc.org.uk	Yes	No	Email	Yes	In person retreats	Online and by telephone
	2Wish	www.2wish.org.uk	No	No	Email	Yes	Locally	Locally

For more national & local services: www.ataloss.org or www.thegoodgrieftrust.org

Examples of support specific to who has been bereaved

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Bereaved group	Name of Service	Contact details	Self help sources	Helpline	Messaging support	Online bereavement community support	Group Support	One to one support
Children & young people	Grief Encounter	www.griefencounter.org.uk	Yes	0808 802 0111	Live web chat and email	No	In person locally	Online and in person locally
	Winston's Wish	www.winstonswish.org	Yes	08088 020 021	Live web chat and email	Yes	Online and in person locally	Online
	Child Bereavement UK	www.childbereavementuk.org	Yes	0800 02 888 40	Live web chat	Yes	Online and in person locally	Online, telephone and in person locally
Young adults	Lets Talk About Loss (18-35 yr olds)	www.letstalkaboutloss.org	Yes	No	No	No	Online and in person locally	No
	Student Grief Network	www.studentgriefnetwork.co.uk	Yes	No	No	No	Online and in person locally	No
People widowed aged under 51	WAY - Widowed and Young (For bereaved partners, married or not).	www.widowedandyoung.org.uk 0300 201 0051	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Online and in person locally	By telephone
People widowed aged over 50	Way Up	www.way-up.co.uk	No	No	No	Yes	Online and in person locally	No
Older people	Age UK	www.ageuk.org.uk	Yes	0800 678 1602	No	No	No	Befriending service locally and by telephone
	Independent Age	www.independentage.org	Yes	0800 319 6789	Live web chat	No	No	No

For more national & local services: www.ataloss.org or www.thegoodgrieftrust.org

For child services: www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

Examples of support specific to who has been bereaved

2/2

Bereaved group	Name of Service	Contact details	Self help sources	Helpline	Messaging support	Online bereavement community support	Group Support	One to one support
Adult siblings	The Compassionate Friends	www.tcf.org.uk	Yes	0345 123 2304	Email	Yes	Online and in person locally	No
	Sibling Grief Club	www.siblinggriefclub.com	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No
LGBTQ+	Switchboard - Grief Encounters	www.switchboard.org.uk	No	01273 20 40 50	Live web chat	No	In person locally	No
	The Good Grief Trust - LGBTQ Café	www.thegoodgrieftrust.org	No	No	No	Yes	Online and in person locally	No
	The New Normal - Queer The Good Grief See also WAY (p.13)	www.thenewnormalcharity.com	No	No	No	No	Online	No
Men	StrongMen - For male peer-to-peer counselling	www.strongmen.org.uk 0800 915 0400	Yes	No	No	Yes	In person weekends	By telephone
	Cruse Bereavement Support	www.cruse.org.uk	Yes	0808 808 1677	No	Yes	In person locally	Online, by telephone and in person locally
People with a learning disability	AtaLoss	www.ataloss.org	Yes	No	Live web chat	No	No	No
	Mencap	www.mencap.org.uk	Yes	0808 808 1111	Email	Yes	No	No
Unpaid Carers (pre & post bereavement)	Carers UK	www.carersuk.org	Yes	0808 808 7777	Email	Yes	No	No
	Mobilise	www.mobiliseonline.co.uk	Yes	No	Live web chat	No	No	No

For more national & local services: www.ataloss.org or www.thegoodgrieftrust.org

For child services: www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

Cultural and faith groups

Bereaved group	Name of Service	Contact details	Self help sources	Helpline	Messaging support	Online bereavement community support	Group Support	One to one support
People from ethnic minority backgrounds	The New Normal-Black and Brown Good Grief	www.thenewnormalcharity.com	No	No	No	No	Online	No
	Black Minds Matter (mental health support)	www.blackmindsmatteruk.com	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes
	Black African and Asian Therapy Network (Directory of therapists)	www.baatn.org.uk	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
Christian	Loss and Hope	www.lossandhope.org	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
	The Bereavement Journey	www.thebereavementjourney.org	Yes	No	No	No	Online and in person locally	No
Jewish	Jewish Bereavement Counselling Service	www.jbcs.org.uk 0208 951 3881	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Muslim women	Muslim Bereavement Support Service	www.mbss.org.uk	Yes	020 3468 7333	No	Yes	Online and in person events	By telephone and in person locally
Sikh	Sikh Helpline	www.sikhhelpline.com	Yes	03000 300063 07999 004363	Email	No	No	No
Welsh speaking	Marie Curie and Diverse Cymru	www.mariecurie.org.uk	Yes	0800 090 2309	Live web chat	No	In person locally	Online, by telephone and in person locally
	2Wish – Bereavement following the sudden death of a child	www.2wish.org.uk 01443 853125	No	No	Email	Yes	Locally	Locally and by telephone
	CRUSE Bereavement Support	www.cruse.org.uk	Yes	0808 808 1677	No	No	Locally	Locally and by telephone

For more national & local services: www.ataloss.org or www.thegoodgrieftrust.org

Acknowledgements

This resource has been developed in partnership with researchers at the Marie Curie Research Centre at Cardiff University and the Palliative and End of Life Care Research Group at the University of Bristol, alongside the National Bereavement Alliance, Marie Curie, The Good Grief Festival and Compassionate Cymru. It was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council Impact Acceleration Fund. The resource was developed using research findings and direct quotes from the participants of three studies (see next page for details) and two workshops. The workshops involved people working in the sector and people with recent experiences of bereavement.

We would like to thank everyone who took part in the workshops and the underpinning research for their much valued contributions to this resource.



GOOD GRIEF
A FESTIVAL OF LOVE & LOSS



National Bereavement
Alliance

We would like to gather your views on this resource, including how helpful you found it and any suggestions you have to improve it. Please complete this short survey to tell us your thoughts: <https://cardiff.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/grief-support-guide-feedback-survey>

Contact: mariecuriecentre@cardiff.ac.uk

How to cite: Grief Support Guide Collaboration (2023). Grief Support Guide. Finding the Bereavement Support That's Right for you. Available at www.nationalbereavementalliance.org.uk/support



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Version 1.0 (September 2023)

Please note that the services and web-resources provided by different organisations may change over time. This resource will be updated after six months to incorporate any such changes.

Supporting evidence

- The Bereavement During Covid-19 study, which included 711 bereaved people in the UK (www.covidbereavement.com). Most relevant publications:
 - Harrop E, (15 authors) & Selman L. 2021. Support needs and barriers to accessing support: Baseline results of a mixed-methods national survey of people bereaved during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Palliative medicine*, 35(10), pp.1985-1997. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/02692163211043372>
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