

# Coping with bereavement

*"I always thought it would be me that went first. I just didn't think about him not being there, taking care of things. I'd feel completely helpless if it weren't for my friends and family being there to support me."*

- Even an expected death can come as a shock
- Ask your funeral director for advice on arrangements
- Expect emotional mood swings
- Look after yourself in your grief
- Get as much support as you can
- Let yourself grieve for as long as you need
- Help those closest to you by preparing legal matters and wills in advance

## **your changing emotions**

### **Your changing emotions**

Coming to terms with the death of a loved one is very difficult, even if that person had been ill for some time and the death was expected. You will find that you go through a range of emotions after a death.

As well as sadness and a longing for what has gone, you may also feel fear, guilt, numbness, let down by the person who has died, shame for feeling so helpless, and anger. Anger is a common part of grieving, anger at the person who has died, at oneself for still being alive, at friends and family who do not seem to understand, or at your god for letting it happen. All of these emotions are normal and you should try to accept them as part of the grieving process.

### **Being practical**

There are a number of practicalities that need to be sorted out after the death. If possible, ask a family member or friend to be with you so you are not alone during the next few days.

- The GP of the deceased must issue a death certificate.
- A funeral director must be appointed to organise the arrangements.
- Friends and family must be notified.
- The death must be registered within five days. You need to take the death certificate with you.
- Notify the pension service.
- Read the will, if there is one.
- You may be entitled to help with funeral expenses.
- Get help with your finances.

See Oxfordshire County Council and Age Concern's websites for latest contact details [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk) [www.ageconcernoxon.org.uk](http://www.ageconcernoxon.org.uk)

## **Get support**

It is really important that you look after yourself at this time and get as much support as you can. The Carers' Centre runs cooking courses for bereaved men - 'have fun, cook for one'. You may have lost interest in eating and have difficulty in sleeping. Try to eat little and often if the thought of a big meal is too much, and rest when you can. If you or a member of your family is worried about you, have a chat with your doctor. Take up any offers of help from friends and family. Even if you do not feel like being sociable, it is still good to have someone with you. This is a difficult time in your life, but you will eventually start to feel better. Make preparations for yourself - Wills and Advance Directives (living wills) - See Age Concern England website.

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## **Awareness**

You will experience many emotions, some of them unexpected, but try to accept your feelings and understand they are a normal part of grieving.

## **Action**

Ask someone to help you with the practicalities, such as informing friends and family, choosing a funeral director and getting the death certificate from the Register office.

## **Talk to**

If you feel you are not coping, talk to friends, family and your GP. Grief can trigger physical symptoms, too, so talk to your doctor about any problems you are experiencing.

## **Prevention**

Grieving is a natural process, so take as long as you need to come to terms with your bereavement. Don't feel you should be 'getting over it' as this will just make you feel worse. If you feel you are becoming depressed, talk to your GP.

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## **Contacts**

- Oxfordshire Register Offices (Births marriages and deaths)  
Tel: 0845 129 5900
- Age Concern Oxfordshire Tel: 01235 849400 Fax: 01235 849449
- CRUSE (helpline) Tel: 0870 167 1677
- Pension Service Tel: 0845 606 0265

## **Weblinks**

[www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) Look under bereavement  
[www.ageconcern.org.uk](http://www.ageconcern.org.uk)

## **Email**

CRUSE [helpline@cruseberevementcare.org.uk](mailto:helpline@cruseberevementcare.org.uk)  
Age Concern Oxfordshire [admin@ageconcernoxon.org.uk](mailto:admin@ageconcernoxon.org.uk)

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