

Grief and Bereavement



The COVID pandemic has seen people we know experience first-hand the viral infection and its far reaching impact. These people may be family members, close friends or a person you were in hospital with, and in some cases this may have sadly resulted in them having lost their lives.

It can be incredibly challenging to cope with the grief and the bereavement of a loved one, a friend or someone you knew.

Suffering a loss during shielding or lockdown restrictions may have prevented you from being able to spend final precious moments with them before they passed away or being able to say goodbye in person, perform religious ceremonies or attend a funeral.

There's no easy way to manage grief, and there is no one "right" way but you can do things to avoid making your suffering worse.

- Recognise that if you are recovering from COVID and dealing with bereavement, it is a lot for anyone to cope with. Surviving COVID doesn't make you immune from the grief of losing someone close to you; indeed it can lead people to irrational feelings of guilt about surviving.

- Recognise that losing someone to whom you were close to is a huge loss, even more so if you were physically apart because of hospitalisation, shielding and social isolation.
- Guilt can be an irrational feeling, you may find yourself thinking, what if..., if only..., I should have... .
- Grief can be prolonged by not expressing how you are feeling and keeping thoughts to yourself.
- Health professionals often think about the patient and their symptoms, therefore may not routinely ask about death of family, friends or someone you knew. But it is an important part of your recovery to feel that you can talk to someone, be reassured that they will always take time to listen.
- If you have experienced loss, please do tell a health professional; this will enable them to be sensitive to your loss in their interactions with you and also to direct you to local sources of support.
- Telling a health professional doesn't mean that you will have to talk about your loss in detail if you don't wish to, you can tell them if you would rather not talk about it any further.
- Allow yourself the space to grieve your loss.

Finally, we strongly recommend that you read the guidance prepared by the British Psychological Society on coping with loss during the COVID crisis which can be [accessed here](#).