

Accessing support: Bereavement

Bereavement is the experience of losing someone close to us, and is associated with a range of intense emotions, feelings, and sometimes physical effects, typically referred to as 'grief'. The bereavement period is different for everybody, but people generally go through various processes, which can be in no specific order. These processes can include: trying to accept the loss, experiencing its physical and emotional effects, and adjusting to life without the person(s) you have lost whilst also finding a way to remember them. The process of bereavement might involve reconnecting with the happier memories of the person you have lost and reinvesting in life and relationships.



Below is a list of organisations who may be able to offer you some support, as well as some resources that you may find helpful to read/listen to. The range and quality of services/support available from such organisations may vary. This list has been gathered as signposting only, and The Royal Marsden cannot guarantee the accuracy of the information provided by an organisation listed or the quality of their services.

If you have any questions or would like further advice/guidance about where to seek specialist help in your local area, you can speak with a member of your Royal Marsden treatment team or the Adult Psychological Support Service.

AtaLoss

A signposting website which you can use to find information on bereavement and the services available to help you. AtaLoss also have a [live chat](#) where you can talk to a bereavement counsellor Mon-Fri 9am-9pm.

Website link: <https://www.ataloss.org/>

The Brigitte Trust – Bereavement Support Group

Free, structured 8-week bereavement programmes to anyone living in Surrey. The sessions are run by a professional facilitator and focus on mutual support, sharing experiences, and learning new coping strategies.

Website link: <https://www.brigitte-trust.org/bereavement-support-2/>

Child Bereavement Charity

Child Bereavement UK helps families rebuild their lives when a child grieves or when a child dies. They support children and young people (up to the age of 25) when someone important to them has died or is not expected to live, and parents and the wider family when a baby or child of any age dies or dying. They also provide training to professionals in health and social



care, education, and the voluntary and corporate sectors, equipping them to provide the best possible care to bereaved families.

Website link: <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/>

Helpline: **0800 02 888 40**

Cruse Bereavement Care

A bereavement charity aiming to provide individuals with support, advice, and information. Their website includes many information pages discussing grief, our responses to it, and how to cope with death across various circumstances (e.g., parents, siblings, friends, colleagues, traumatic deaths, etc).

They also offer a "CRUSE Chat" service which allows users to have an online text-based conversation with one of their bereavement counsellors. Additionally there is a free, confidential helpline (**0808 808 1677**) staffed by trained volunteers which operates Mon-Fri from 9am-9pm.

Local branches often arrange group support sessions (most online via Zoom). For those looking for 1-on-1 support, CRUSE offers up to 6 free bereavement support sessions delivered over the telephone or video with fully trained volunteer counsellors. Please note that these support sessions are in high demand and generally have waiting lists.

Website link: <https://www.cruse.org.uk/>

Cruse also have a separate service for young people who have been bereaved: <https://www.hopeagain.org.uk/>

Grief Encounters

A charity supporting bereaved children, by offering one-to-one counselling, workshops, music, art and drama therapy. They also have a dedicated trauma team and support groups for parents who have lost children of any age.

Website link: <https://www.griefencounter.org.uk/>

The Good Grief Trust

A charity run by people who have experienced bereavement, which offers information about where you can access grief-related support. They list services by your local area ([How do I find help near me? – The Good Grief Trust](#)), including links to information, helplines, advice, and encouraging stories from others.

Website link: <https://www.thegoodgrieftrust.org/>

Jigsaw South East

A charity which supports children and their families across Surrey, parts of West Sussex, Kent and surrounding areas. Jigsaw support children and their families who are preparing



for a loss, as well as providing grief support following a bereavement. They tailor their support to meet the needs of the family through telephone advice and consultation, an initial meeting at home or at school, individual support with children and young people via telephone or video call, and signposting to other agencies and organisations.

Website link: <https://www.jigsawsoutheast.org.uk/>

Sue Ryder

Offers information and advice that can help people cope with grief and deal with the practical issues after someone has died. Practically, Sue Ryder can support with registering a death, arranging a funeral, accessing bereavement benefits, and sorting out personal belongings, amongst other things. They answer frequently asked questions for when someone is grieving and provide information about where you may be able to access support in your local area and/or online.

Website link: <https://www.sueryder.org/how-we-can-help/online-bereavement-support>

The Loss Foundation

A charity dedicated to providing bereavement support following the loss of a loved one to cancer (they have also recently started to support people bereaved by COVID-19). They offer education and a variety of support events to help people at different points of the grieving process. These events include workshops, training, structured therapy groups (7 sessions led by trained psychologists which focus on overcoming an aspect of the grieving experience), and supportive social events to meet others with similar experiences.

They also offer mindfulness and relaxation resources focusing on coping with various challenges which might follow a bereavement such as: depression, anger, sleep difficulties, and anxiety.

Website link: <https://thelossfoundation.org/#mytop>

Winston's Wish

A charity that helps children, teenagers and young adults aged 0-24 years who are grieving. They offer information, on-demand services, bereavement support and counselling to young people across the UK. Winston's Wish also support adults who are caring for young grieving people, including parents, schools, and healthcare professionals, through information, resources, training, and on-demand services.

Winston's Wish offer a free, confidential helpline service (**08088 020 021**) which operates Mon-Fri from 8am-8pm.

Website link: <https://www.winstonswish.org/>

Books about grief for children

"When Someone Very Special Dies: Children Can Learn to Cope with Grief"

By Marge Heegard



A workbook by Marge Heegard and illustrated by children. The book helps children understand the concept of death and come to terms with their feelings towards it. It encourages children to identify support systems and recognise their personal strengths which can help them cope with bereavement.

Amazon website link: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/WHEN-SOMEONE-VERY-SPECIAL-DIES/dp/0962050202>

"Badger's Parting Gifts"

By Susan Verley

A children's picture book by Susan Verley aimed at helping young children understand and cope with loss, grief, and death.

Amazon website link: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Badgers-Parting-Gifts-Susan-Varley/dp/0006643175>

"Beginnings and Endings with Lifetimes In Between (A Beautiful Way to Explain Life and Death to Children)"

By Bryan Mellonie

Unlike other books which may focus on death in a particular circumstance (e.g., after a pet, grandparent, or other family member), this book tries to help children understand loss and death as part of the natural cycle of life where all that is alive has a beginning, an end, and living in between.

Amazon website link: <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Beginnings-Endings-Lifetimes-Between-Beautiful/dp/185028038X>

Other APSS Information and Resources

The Adult Psychological Support Service has a range of signposting information sheets on topics such as: coping at different stages of the cancer pathway, supporting your physical and emotional wellbeing, relationships, and information specific to certain types of cancer.

You can view the signposting information sheets on The Royal Marsden's [Patient Information Library](#) and the [Adult Psychological Support Service Website](#) (under 'Further information and resources'). You can also request a copy of these by emailing Psychological.SupportAdmin@rmh.nhs.uk or telephoning **020 7808 2777** (Chelsea) / **020 8661 3006** (Sutton).

Additional support services

Cancer Care Map

An online database of cancer support services. You can search by postcode or by particular themes e.g. cancer type.

Website link: <https://www.cancercaremap.org/>

Maggie's Cancer Centres



Cancer care centres with multiple locations, including The Royal Marsden Hospital, Sutton and Charing Cross Hospital, West London. Workshops, groups, information and one-to-one counselling available.

Website link: <https://www.maggies.org/>

Phone number: **0300 123 1801**

NHS Talking Therapies

NHS website to help you find your local psychological talking therapies service based on your GP address. Your local NHS talking therapies service can be helpful if you would like psychological support for cancer when you are no longer regularly coming in for appointments at The Royal Marsden, as well as for concerns unrelated to cancer or that predated your cancer and have become worse due to it.

Website link: <https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-nhs-talking-therapies-service/find-your-gp>

If you need any specialist and personalised advice about your cancer treatment, symptoms or side effects, please contact The Royal Marsden Macmillan Hotline. This hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week on **020 8915 6899**.

The Royal Marsden's Adult Psychological Support Service offers short-term, cancer-specific psychological and psychiatric support. You can either self-refer or ask somebody in your Royal Marsden healthcare team to refer you. For more information, visit [Adult Psychological Support Service | The Royal Marsden](#). Alternatively, contact us directly on **020 7808 2777** (Chelsea), **020 8661 3006** (Sutton), or email Psychological.SupportAdmin@rmh.nhs.uk.



If you have ideas for other signposting or information sheets, or if you would like to be involved in working with APSS to improve the service we offer, please scan the QR code to see more about our patient and public involvement, or email Psychological.SupportAdmin@rmh.nhs.uk or telephone **020 7808 2777** (Chelsea) / **020 8661 3006** (Sutton) with your ideas.

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