

Walking through the valley

A guide to bereavement support for churches



Care for the Family
Tovey House,
Cleppa Park,
Newport,
NP10 8BA

029 2081 0800
cff.org.uk

Produced and published by Care for the Family.
Copyright © 2012 Care for the Family.
This edition 2024.
All rights reserved.

Except as stated, no part of this guide may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means – electronic, mechanical, scan, photocopy, recording or otherwise – for any purpose whatsoever, without written permission of the publisher.

A Christian initiative to strengthen family life, offering support to everyone.
Care for the Family is a registered charity (England and Wales: 1066905; Scotland: SC038497).
A company limited by guarantee no. 3482910. Registered in England and Wales.



Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 2 |
| The last taboo: Bereavement and society | 3 |
| Giving comfort: Bereavement and the church | 4 |
| Understanding the heartache: How a bereaved person might be feeling | 6 |
| Standing together: How the church can support a bereaved person | 8 |
| Saying goodbye: The funeral process | 10 |
| Along the journey: The days and weeks after the funeral | 12 |
| A sense of community: On-going support | 14 |
| The loss of a partner: When a spouse has died | 15 |
| An unthinkable loss: When a child has died | 18 |
| The unexpected loss: Sudden and traumatic bereavement | 21 |
| The long goodbye: Bereavement after a long-term illness | 22 |
| Misunderstood death: Bereavement through suicide | 23 |
| Training for churches: Bereavement Care Awareness training | 24 |
| Further support and resources | 26 |

Introduction

This resource is designed to help you support bereaved people in your church family or wider community. It is likely that all of us, at some point in our lives will have the responsibility of coming alongside and supporting those who have lost loved ones. It is a privileged but sometimes daunting task for both church leaders and individuals. In producing this booklet we have used information from a UK-wide survey of church leaders and our experience of supporting bereaved people for over 30 years.

Whether you have many years of working in this area, or are relatively new to it, and whatever your understanding of grief processes, we hope this will be of help as you support those suffering the pain and heartache of loss.

The last taboo

Bereavement and society

Society's attitude towards death and bereavement has changed over the past hundred years.

Mortality rates a century ago were higher and families and communities lived much closer together. Death, the rituals surrounding it, and the grief of the bereaved were much more public and communal than they are now.

In today's society the subject of death is not something that we generally like to think about, despite the fact that it is the one certainty in life for us all. Our culture struggles with public expressions of grief and talking about death has become the last great taboo. Because of this it is sometimes difficult to understand what those suffering the pain and heartache of the loss of a loved one are going through and we can feel ill-equipped to support them. Often we struggle with the awkwardness and embarrassment of not quite knowing what to do or say.

It would be so much more convenient if the impact of bereavement were something we could simply 'get over', but the reality is that for anyone suffering a close bereavement, grief is a journey that takes time. It is a path strewn with heartache, pain, complex emotions and difficult practicalities. Where there is silence or a perceived lack of understanding from the

community around them, the bereaved person can easily become isolated and confused. This makes it difficult for them to grieve effectively and rebuild their life.

There are over
600,000

deaths every year in the UK¹



With each one likely to significantly affect five people on average, around

3.5 million
people a year.

¹ Office of National Statistics 2018

Giving comfort

Bereavement and the church

It's interesting that even when faith has never really played a particularly central role in their lives, many people instinctively turn to the church to help them grieve the passing of loved ones.

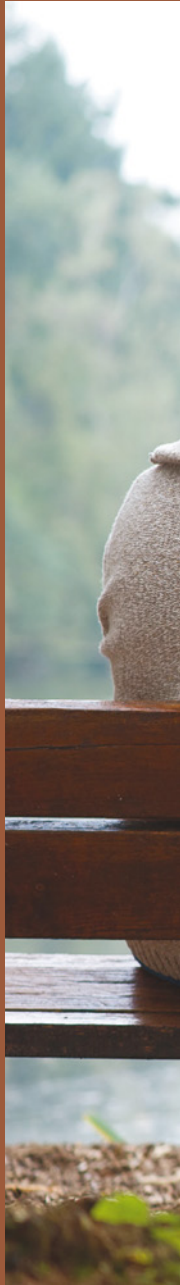
Perhaps it is the ceremony, the comfort of faith, or the need for a deeper spirituality, but the church is often felt to be the most appropriate place to turn to in matters of life and death.


Christian services are performed throughout the UK by ministers of all denominations in churches, crematoria and funeral parlours. The Church of England alone performs funeral services for over a third of those who die in England each year and it is likely that well over half of newly-bereaved people are in contact with a church.

With over three million people suffering a close bereavement each year, the church is in a unique position to be able to connect with and support people on their grief journey.

Moved to compassion

The mission of the church in respect of bereaved people is clear: the community of faith is to come alongside all those who are struggling and in need of support. The scriptures are full of exhortations to care for 'widows and orphans', and they recount two specific occasions when Jesus was 'moved to compassion' in the face of family grief (the stories of Lazarus in John 11:1-44 and the Widow of Nain in Luke 7:11-17). The church is challenged to mirror Jesus' compassionate approach to grief, loss and bereavement.





'In some very difficult circumstances I have found that just sitting quietly with someone, allowing them to be silent to talk or cry while I do little other than pray silently has been very helpful.'

Church of England Minister,
Yorkshire

Understanding the heartache

How a bereaved person might be feeling

For many people facing a close bereavement, the loss is devastating. Grief has no set pattern – it is unique to each individual – yet there are some common experiences that bereaved people face.

In the early days of their bereavement people may feel shock, numbness or a sense of denial. They may find it difficult to function normally and basic tasks may seem overwhelming. Common emotions that bubble to the surface include anger, guilt, fear and an overwhelming sadness.

Anger

Even if the death was nobody's fault, it is very common for a grieving person to feel angry. This may be directed towards themselves, towards God, other family members, doctors or even the person who died, for abandoning them.

Guilt

People can often feel guilt about things that they didn't say or do, or because they feel they should have been able to prevent the death in some way. They may also feel guilt if they experience certain emotions they don't think they should have – for example, having a sense of relief after the death or being unable to cry. They can also feel guilty when they have a good time or laugh about something.

Such feelings often cause distress and self-blame.

Fear

After a significant loss people can become fearful or anxious. They may suffer panic attacks, be afraid of what might happen in the future, or feel anxious about their own or another's mortality. They may also be fearful of being alone.

Sadness

Profound sadness is the most common response to grief. People can feel overwhelmed by their loss, be unable to stop crying, or be in a very fragile emotional state.

'The days, weeks and months following the death were the most painful of our lives. We were utterly bereft and yet we knew we had to carry on living.'

Paul and Sarah, bereaved parents



Sadness can overshadow many emotions and experiences after bereavement. Similar emotions include despair, emptiness or a deep-seated sense of loneliness.

A range of physical symptoms can also accompany grief such as stomach or chest pains, loss of appetite, nausea, tiredness or insomnia, confusion and an inability to concentrate. The heartache of loss is real and deep, and yet it is also part of the journey from grief to restoration.

Children and grief

Whether you're directly supporting children, or helping a bereaved person understand the grief journey from a child or young person's perspective, recognising the different ways we handle grief can be helpful.

Children and young people experience the death of someone close in their own unique way. Their understanding will be shaped by their developmental age. They will grieve in many different ways and will display a wide range of reactions and emotions. Children can show sadness or worry through their words or their actions. Their behaviour may change as part of their grief. There are specific organisations that offer support and information for bereaved children (see resources and other organisations at the back of this booklet).

Standing together

How the church can support a bereaved person



As so many funerals in the UK have some involvement from the local church, there is a great opportunity for the church to get to know and support an individual or family who has been bereaved.

Ways in which the church can help:

Visit as soon as possible after the bereavement (and arrange follow up visits).

Help with practical tasks.

Liaise with the undertaker or funeral director as appropriate.

Discuss the funeral arrangements and help to choose hymns and readings.

Keep in contact with the family after the funeral.

Pray for the family, or with them if appropriate.

The desire to care and support should, however, be tempered with sensitivity – a well-meaning rush to assist and help can be very stressful and pressurising

for someone who has recently been bereaved.

It is important to recognise that not all church leaders have the time or resources to undertake the level of support that a bereaved person may require. Where possible encourage offers in the church to help.

Your first visit

The first visit to a bereaved person, whether you already know them or not, is vital. Be aware that at this stage they are likely to be numb and in shock, and may be 'going through the motions'. The most important thing is to show them that you care and to let them set the agenda as much as possible.

'I think the most important thing is to let the bereaved person take the lead. Sometimes they will want to talk about their loved one and other times they will want to talk about other things. And it is alright to laugh with them. Offer to pray with them and don't be offended if they don't want to. Offering a listening ear and a shoulder to cry on is the very best thing you can do. No advice, no solutions. It is just hard to lose someone.' Church of England Minister, Herefordshire

These pointers may help when visiting:

- **Listening is the most important thing to do** – a simple 'I'm sorry for your loss' is better than a thousand words.
- **Periods of silence are OK** – they are part of the grieving process – and your presence with them will, in itself, be comforting.
- **Let them set the agenda for their grief** – know that it's OK to cry, talk, or remain silent if they need to. There's no 'right' way to respond or express their feelings.
- **Grief is unique to everyone who experiences it** – so try not to say that you understand how they feel, even if you've been bereaved yourself.
- **Try to discern how spiritually aware the bereaved person may be** – use Bible verses to comfort where appropriate, but also be aware to not sound like you're disregarding their feelings of grief, or dismissing genuine doubts and questions. Do offer to pray with them if appropriate.

- **Be aware of all the practical issues** – there are a lot of tasks that need to be done by the bereaved person in the first couple of weeks after a death. Offer to help in any way that you are able and that seems appropriate.
- **Make sure that they know that you and the church are available** – look for ways to show support, both now and in the future. You may want to leave a helpful resource on grief with them (see page 27), alongside your church's contact details.
- **Keep your visit short** – stay in touch and offer to visit again soon.

'A few days after our daughter died I met Judy our local vicar, who is one of the most amazing people I have ever come across. She supported us, loved us and kept us functioning as a family.'

Clare, bereaved parent

Saying goodbye

The funeral process

The funeral is an essential stepping stone on the journey of grief and helping to plan it is a very practical contribution you can make.

Many people will appreciate help and guidance, but remember that it's important for them to remain practically involved: their participation can help them come to terms with events and also give them something to focus on to carry them through the first few days of grieving.

Talking to the family to discuss their wishes for the funeral can help to make it personal to them, not just a civic duty or a religious necessity. If their loved one is not previously known to the church, gathering information from the family

about their life and character can be especially helpful. It's important to make sure you give the family as positive an experience as possible. If they feel their loved one was remembered accurately and that he or she would have liked the service, it will help them feel that the person has been honoured, and help to give them some comfort while they grieve.

For a range of further guidance and practical help on what to do after a bereavement.

See: [gov.uk/after-a-death](https://www.gov.uk/after-a-death)





What other church leaders have said:

'Preparation for a funeral has always been a positive experience. When doing ministerial training it was suggested that we use some of the actual words that relatives used when talking about their loved one. I have found this to be greatly appreciated by the family.'

Methodist Minister, Hampshire

'Often families, regardless of the age of the deceased, feel unable to bring children to funeral services. So we have worked at creating short acts of worship after the funeral that children can attend. These can be held either as an independent event or at a burial of ashes which has a much more 'all age' feel.'

Church of England Minister,
Tyne and Wear

'It's important to spend quality time on the home visit and preparation for the funeral. I like to give a copy of the words used at the service to the next of kin.'

Church of England Minister,
Warwickshire

'The service itself is of tremendous importance, but its helpfulness depends on ensuring at least two visits to the family to listen and discuss the service so that 'the person at the front' is not a stranger and is able to offer the best possible goodbye.'

Baptist Minister, Kent

Along the journey

The days and weeks after the funeral

Often the time after the funeral can be very hard for a bereaved person. At this stage, the everyday reality of their loss becomes apparent and the support of friends or family members can begin to decrease.

For those experiencing a close bereavement this can be a very lonely and isolating time. It can appear to them that those around them are now over it and are getting on with life, while they themselves are still in a very dark place.

During the days and weeks following the funeral, a church can support a bereaved person in a number of ways:

- **Keep in touch** – whether through a visit or a phone call. If you are in regular contact you will be in a good place to forge relationships and find out how they are coping.
- **Offer continuing practical support** – such as meals, or lifts (where possible), but try to ensure you are not disempowering them, as they will find having some practical jobs to do helpful. Taking them shopping or helping them plan their meals can provide a helpful balance.
- **Talk openly with them about the person who died** – they may feel that other friends or family members are reluctant to keep hearing about their loss and so need to be given ‘permission’ to talk about it themselves. Don’t be embarrassed if they get upset; it’s OK if they start to cry while you talk.
- **Help them to deal with any changes** – the bereavement may have brought new caring responsibilities with it, so you may need to chat through these changes with them or help them with making key decisions.





'In my experience, there is no "normal" time-period in the bereavement process. Each person deals with grief in different ways so it is about having patience, understanding, and a shoulder to cry on. Most of the time it is also about just being there when they are ready to grieve.'

Independent Church Leader,
Dorset

A sense of community

On-going support

As the weeks turn into months, a bereaved person may still require support.

The grieving process can last a lot longer than people expect. There is no time limit on grief and a church can help to support them at this time by walking together with them on their grief journey. Creating a sense of a caring community can speak volumes.

Ways in which a church can provide on-going support to a bereaved person:

- Let them know that the church is available for them – while it can be difficult to keep visiting regularly, a phone call or occasional visit can make all the difference.
- Look out for signs that the bereaved person isn't coping – if they continue to seem very depressed, or have cut themselves off from other people, they may need to seek help from a doctor.
- It's good to remember the anniversary of the death – perhaps by sending a card to let them know that you're thinking of them.
- Consider putting on a memorial service near Christmas – for everyone who has been bereaved in the past year. Christmas can often be a difficult time, and it can help to be able to remember the person who has died in a positive way.
- Invite them to church events or out for coffee – it can be helpful for a person who is grieving to have a change of scenery – something to look forward to that will help to break up the day.
- Consider whether you can start a group for bereaved people – you may want to set up a bereavement visiting team, which can be particularly effective ways of providing support.

'People need time. Time to come to terms with their loss, time to step back until they are ready. They also need encouragement and support to get involved and to know that they are still needed, valued and have lots to offer.'

Church of Ireland Minister,
Co. Armagh

The loss of a life partner

When a spouse has died



For someone grieving the death of a spouse, it is very likely that the primary emotions they will face will be loneliness and heartache.

Other issues, both emotional and practical, may cause anxiety over the weeks and months as they journey through the grieving process. These can include:

Loss of identity

Whilst they will clearly be grieving for the person who has died, they will also be grieving for the role and relationship they had with them. They are no longer a husband or wife,

or part of a couple – often after a lifetime together – and this can be very hard to come to terms with.

Loss of friendships

Social situations can become very difficult. They may now find that they are uncomfortable around friends who they used to spend time with as a couple, or feel alienated from their former social circle.



Loneliness

When you have spent many years being part of a couple there can be a profound sense of loneliness at the thought of having to cope with the rest of life on your own.

New responsibilities

A widow or widower will suddenly find themselves taking responsibility for many new things they may never have faced before. These could be practical things such as cooking meals, DIY or taking primary responsibility for childcare. There could be significant financial issues depending on the situation with regard to insurance and a will. There will also be lots of decisions to be made, which can be very daunting for someone to do on their own.

Concern for children

If a bereaved person has children, it is very probable that they will be worrying about how they are coping with the death of their parent. They may also worry about how they will cope now they are parenting on their own. They may busy themselves with

looking after the children and put their own feelings of grief on hold.

Someone who has been widowed is most likely to be feeling as though no one understands what they are going through, so it is important to give them lots of opportunities to talk. They may also be struggling to understand what life without their husband or wife will look like, and so it can be helpful, at the right time, to encourage them to take a step forward. This doesn't mean that they are leaving their loved one who has died behind, but that they are instead, finding a positive way to take their memories of their spouse with them and integrating them into their future.

'My family and friends were wonderful. They did everything they could to help us, but none of them really understood my grief because they hadn't "been there".'

Chantal, a young widow

Widowed Young Support

Support after the death of a partner at a young age

Losing your partner at any age is heart-breaking. For those who have been widowed young, the untimely loss is simply devastating and immensely challenging.

Care for the Family have an incredible team who provide support through their own experience of loss.

Including:

- **Telephone befriending** – offering encouragement and support from someone who understands.
- **Support days and weekends** – offering hope and practical help on the grief journey whilst providing an opportunity to be with people who understand the pain of loss. Being able to share or simply listen to others in a safe, supportive environment is an ideal opportunity

to discover some fresh perspective and a renewed strength, purpose and hope for the future.

- **Email newsletters and online resources** – helpful insights for those who are widowed young, including; encouraging articles, real-life stories and resource recommendations.



Find out more:
[cff.org.uk/wys](https://www.cff.org.uk/wys)



An unthinkable loss

When a child has died

The death of a child is every parent's worst nightmare.

It seems to be contrary to nature itself; regardless of the age of the child, it is never part of the expected order of life. Every parent has hopes and dreams for their children, and when these are shattered by an untimely death, it is simply devastating. Bereaved parents will face a number of challenges. These can include:

Relationship difficulties

The death of a child can put immense pressure on a couple's relationship because the parents may well grieve in different ways from each other and this can cause added tension. It can also be hard for a couple to support each other when they both have to deal with their own individual pain.

Feeling isolated

Most bereaved parents have never met anyone else who has lost a child, and it can be a very lonely and isolating experience. They may find that other people avoid them because they don't know what to say or that people treat them very differently than they did before the death.

Parenting their remaining children

Alongside coping with their own grief, those who still have other children to look after will have to deal with the day-to-day issues of parenting and caring for a child who is grieving a sibling.




On-going challenges

The grief a parent will have after the death of a child will carry on throughout their lifetime. There will be many occasions over the years where they will be reminded of what 'should have been'. When they see their child's peers reach certain milestones such as starting school, going to university or getting married, it can trigger an unexpected response and the pain can feel just as raw as it did in the early days after the death.

Some bereaved parents have to face particularly challenging circumstances. When an only child has died, the

parents have gone from being a family to being childless. They have to deal with the added loss of identity now that they are no longer visibly someone's parent. If a single parent has been bereaved they are much more likely to feel lonely and in need of someone to talk to.

For parents who have experienced a still birth, the pain of losing a child is just as raw. They have not had the opportunity to get to know their baby, or have happy memories of family life with the child.



'Anniversaries are always hard reminders that life is not what it used to be. Even though we learn to live life again and find a "new normal", anniversaries, and particularly the run-up to them, are very painful.'

Paul, a bereaved father

Bereaved Parent Support

Supporting parents after the death of a child

Very few people can truly understand the pain a parent feels after the death of a child at any age. It's a unique and devastating journey that changes every area of life.

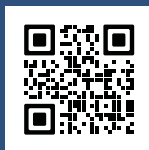
Care for the Family have an incredible team who provide support through their own experience of loss. We also support bereaved adult siblings alongside this project who have lost a brother or sister.

Support includes:

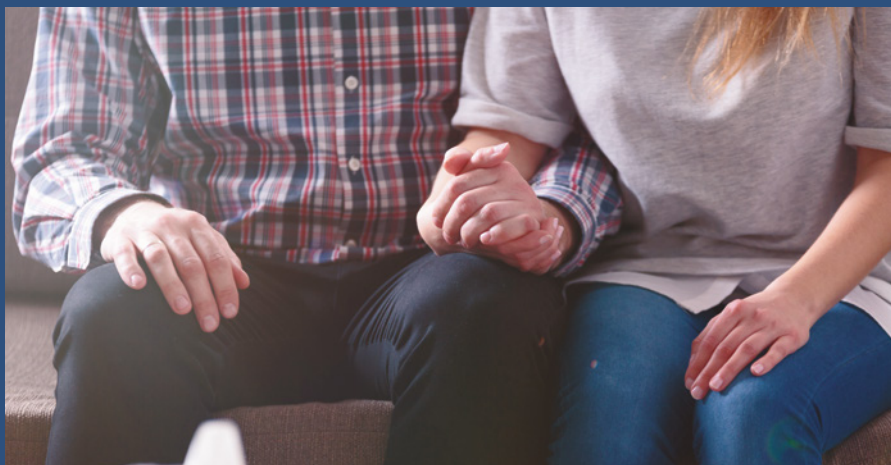
- **Telephone befriending** – offering encouragement and support from someone who understands.
- **Support days and weekends** – offering hope and practical help on the grief journey whilst providing an opportunity to be with people who understand the pain of loss. Being able to share or simply listen to others in a safe, supportive environment is an ideal opportunity

to discover some fresh perspective and a renewed strength, purpose and hope for the future.

- **Email newsletters and online resources** – helpful insights for bereaved parents, including; encouraging articles, real-life stories and book recommendations.



Find out more:
cff.org.uk/bps



The unexpected loss

Sudden and traumatic bereavement

Death under any circumstances will be traumatic for those left behind, however, when a sudden and unexpected death occurs – maybe as a result of a fatal accident or through medical causes – there is an additional impact.

Receiving news of a sudden death will understandably shock someone to the core, as they have not had time to emotionally prepare for the death.

Some of the first emotions that those learning of a traumatic death will feel are shock and numbness, often followed by a sense of disbelief or denial. Shock can cause people to act on autopilot, where they carry out routine things without really focusing on what they're doing; or, they may even lose their ability to function in regular activities. This is where they may appreciate a practical offer of help with everyday tasks, things that now seem insignificant to them in the light of their present circumstances.

In the event of an accident or unlawful death, a Police Family Liaison Officer may be assigned to support the family during the initial stages of investigation. There may also be interest from the media, which can bring additional pressure to the bereaved family. It may be appropriate to offer to help with tasks such as preparing a written statement or selecting a photo to give to reporters. Always deal with such

situations carefully and seek advice where possible.

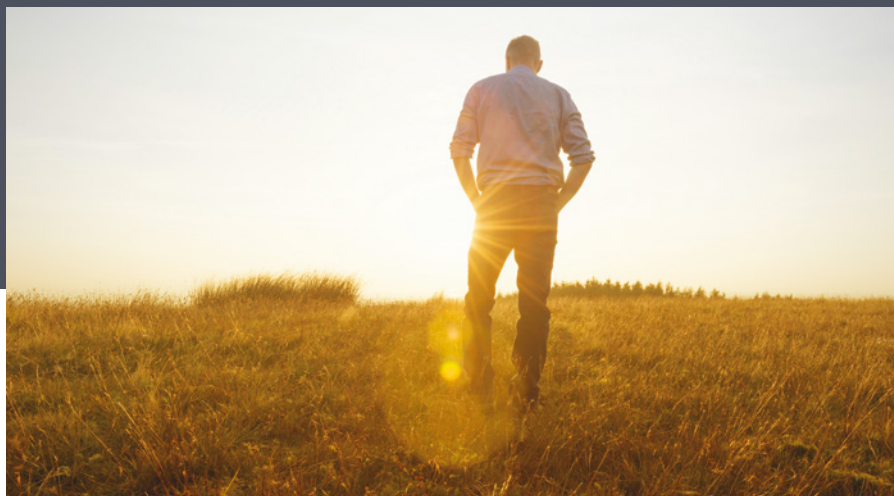
With sudden death the absence of an opportunity to say goodbye or put things right can be an added complication for those who are grieving. They may feel that they need to replay the circumstances of the death again and again until they are as sure as they can be of what happened. Because of this, they will need many opportunities to talk and be listened to as they go through this process.

'In one hour my life had turned upside down. One minute I was happily married with two children, the next I was a widow. One minute we were going swimming, the next I was saying "Goodbye". Outside the sun was still shining but to me the sky was black.'

Liz, a young widow

The long goodbye

Bereavement after a long-term illness



When someone dies after a long-term illness, people can sometimes assume that it is easier for the family and close friends to cope with.

However, there will be a number of issues that the family will face, and coming to terms with the loss will be just as hard as it would be for any other type of bereavement.

Even though they may have been 'prepared' for the death, the person who has been bereaved may still go into shock when the death finally comes. They are also likely to feel guilt, particularly if they experience relief after the death. They may feel relieved that their loved one is no longer in pain, or because the responsibility of many

months of care is now over. They may also feel a loss of identity now that they are no longer a primary 'carer' for someone.

It can be helpful for someone in this situation to focus on the memories that they have of their loved one before they were ill, rather than on the final tough few months. Encourage them to take small steps towards rebuilding their lives as and when they are ready.

Misunderstood death

Bereavement through suicide

When someone dies as a result of a decision to end their own life, society sometimes struggles to know how to interact with the family of the person who has died.

For family and close friends this can be a very difficult time. They are not only dealing with the loss of someone close to them, but they are navigating the added complication of understanding why the person chose to end their life.

In many ways the painful journey they will be travelling will be similar to others who have been suddenly bereaved, so they will need much of the same support. However, they will also have unique challenges and have to deal with a more complex range of emotions.

If the one who has died has led a troubled life, and even if they had caused pain to those close to them, their family members or friends will still experience genuine grief. There can also be a sense of guilt that they weren't able to do more to help their loved one or prevent them from taking their own life – 'Why didn't I spot that something was wrong?'. If there were no warning signs for the family, they could be left with a greater sense of 'why', particularly if there was no note.

Often with this type of death there is also the trauma of the involvement of a coroner, and the police; post-mortems and inquests can often intensify the distress.

These additional pressures can physically take their toll on those who are grieving; they may feel despair, lose sleep and their appetite, and the person who found the body may experience traumatic flashbacks or nightmares. This is normal, but if it's prolonged, you may want to suggest that they speak to their GP.

'It is like a bereavement and a divorce combined. The person you loved most in the world has died, but they have also chosen to leave. There is no time for questions or goodbyes.'

Jackie, a young widow

Training to support bereaved people

Our *Bereavement Care Awareness* training, available online and in-person, aims to equip churches by giving them the tools they need to support bereaved people in the church or wider community. This one-off, 3 ½ hour session is ideal for church leaders, pastoral care teams and anyone who is interested in supporting bereaved people.

The training provides:

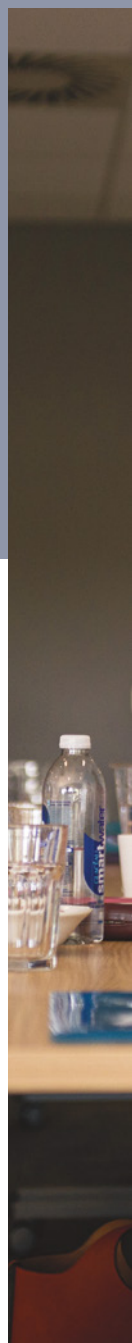
- Ideas for the practical and emotional support you can offer someone in the weeks and months after the funeral.
- A better knowledge of how bereavement affects people in different ways.
- An understanding of the grieving process.
- Practical skills to carry out supportive listening, a key tool in bereavement support.
- Advice and tips on ways your church can support bereaved people in your community.



Scan the QR code to find out more.

cff.org.uk/bca

'Great training that has given me greater confidence when pastorally supporting the many bereaved people who come my way.'





Further support and resources

Support for church leaders and pastoral care teams

Supporting those who have been bereaved can be hard work. Meeting with the family, helping them to plan the funeral and oversee the day itself, whilst providing pastoral and practical support, can really take its toll on church leaders and lay people.

It's important to look after yourself while you're supporting others. If possible take some time to rest before a funeral and take time out before and after pastoral visits, particularly if they are sensitive ones. Ensure that you have some support around

you and people with whom you can speak openly and honestly about this aspect of ministry.

'Listening and pastoral care can be very emotionally draining. In a very busy Parish, never-ending bereavement work can eventually catch up on you without you realising it, with overtiredness, or even mild reactive depression. At some point you may have to say "no more" in order to recover.'

Church of England Minister, Norfolk



'In bereavement, loneliness can occur when people don't try to connect because they don't want to get it wrong or hurt us further. But the people who do try – even if they stumble along the way – can become our biggest help in the midst of bereavement.'

The Grief Journey

At Care for the Family we understand that everyone responds differently to bereavement and therefore there isn't just one way to manage grief. We want to help you to support those who are living with loss to discover hope for the future, and find the strength to rebuild.

You may want to encourage those you are supporting to take a look at our website for bereavement resources, articles, books and events.

Our **Bereaved Parent Support** and **Widowed Young Support** teams have staff and volunteers who have experienced a similar loss themselves and are trained to come alongside individuals on their grief journey.

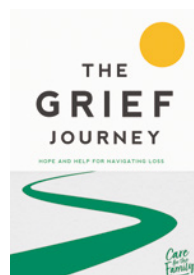
cff.org.uk/bereavement

The Grief Journey book

A compassionate guide to coping with the initial weeks and months following loss, and understanding the longer journey. Includes topics such as taking care of yourself, coping with others' responses, managing family relationships and much more, this practical book is full of quotes and stories from people who really 'get it'.

This is a great resource to give to someone on the bereavement journey as part of your pastoral support. Find the book here:

cff.org.uk/griefjourney



Other helpful organisations

National signposting service

AtaLoss provides the UK's bereavement signposting service. Their website offers information and signposting to national, specialist and local bereavement services, including telephone helplines.

ataloss.org

Cruse Bereavement Support

Cruse offer a telephone helpline, online chat service and local branches that provide group sessions and one-to-one support.

0808 808 1677

cruse.org.uk

The Bereavement Journey

A six-session resource that uses films and small group discussions to help guide people through their grief. Groups are run across the country and online.

thebereavementjourney.org

When Someone Dies

A step-by-step guide to what to do after someone dies, including registering the death, arranging the funeral, help with funeral costs, dealing with the estate, and information on your benefits, pension and taxes.

gov.uk/when-someone-dies

Age UK

Provides general support for older people through their helpline, including the bereaved and lonely.

0800 678 1602

ageuk.org.uk

Saying Goodbye

Provides comprehensive information, advice, support, counselling and therapy to anyone who has suffered the loss of a baby, at any stage of pregnancy, at birth or in infancy.

0300 323 1350

sayinggoodbye.org

Child Bereavement UK

Helps children who are grieving and supports parents in talking to their children about bereavement. They offer a helpline, live chat via their website, or email.

0800 02 888 40

childbereavementuk.org

Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide

Information and support for people affected by loss through suicide.

0300 111 5065

uksobs.org

About Care for the Family

Established in 1988, Care for the Family is a charity based in the UK, but with an increasing reach internationally. Our aim is to support families whatever their circumstances. We provide this support, online and in person, for parents, couples and those who are bereaved, through events, courses, podcasts, volunteer befrienders, books and other evidence-based, accessible resources. We also train those who work with families whether in a professional or informal capacity.

Further guides for churches include:

- Supporting families of children with additional needs
- Supporting new parents through mental health challenges
- Supporting people through divorce and separation

029 2081 0800

[cff.org.uk](https://www.cff.org.uk)



A Christian initiative to strengthen family life, offering support to everyone.
Care for the Family is a registered charity (England and Wales: 1066905; Scotland: SC038497).
A company limited by guarantee no. 3482910. Registered in England and Wales.
Registered office: Tovey House, Cleppa Park, Newport, NP10 8BA.

