

Faith Leaders and Celebrants

For people working with those who have been bereaved

This resource has been prepared in conjunction with faith leaders and celebrants who offer funeral services and bereavement care to the families they work with.

Its intention is to:

- Share best practice in support for the bereaved
- Help with signposting to bereavement support
- Signpost to emotional health and wellbeing support for those engaged in working with the bereaved

Key message:
Public Health promotes the message that grief is a normal human response to the death of a loved one and most (85%) people will manage to live well with their grief with the help of family, friends, good neighbours and trusted work colleagues. People who require more support, such as specialised counselling, will still need ongoing care and assistance from people they are in contact with.
Did you know?
Faith leaders and celebrants can help those who have been bereaved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With kindness, care and support during their period of involvement • Encouraging family and friends of the bereaved to offer support • By knowing where to signpost people to for local help

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Simple things which can help the bereaved are:

- Acknowledging the death
- Listening well if the person wants to talk
- Being honest, open and empathetic
- Offering practical support
- Keeping in touch

Helpful things to do and say that offer comfort and hope to those who are left behind:

Encourage family and friends of the bereaved to:

- Spend time together
- Make a cup of tea and sit with the bereaved
- Share memories together
- Plan together how to support each other on key dates such as anniversaries

For those new to the experience of bereavement can you let them know that:

- Using the name of the person who has died is honouring and not upsetting
- It's good to use the words 'death', 'dying', 'bereavement' and 'grief' gently and with kindness
- Grief is exhausting so it's helpful to make specific offers of practical help
- There is no set time for grief and each person's experience of grief is different
- Grief does not get smaller, but we grow around it
- Looking after personal health and wellbeing matters
- Support is available in the local area

Listening is key and silence is okay. There can be comfort in simply being present with the person who has been bereaved.

Support available for all

Can you help to signpost those who have been bereaved to further help and support?

Key websites

lets-get.com/bereavement local Public Health website, trusted by clinical psychologists.

Topics include:

- Self-help for learning to live with grief
- Local and national organisations offering support
- Support with grief associated with coronavirus
- Bereavement affecting people who have dementia or learning disability
- Death of a child
- Miscarriage, stillbirth and neonatal death

For support to plan for end of life also see lets-get.com/bereavement

This includes

- Advanced care planning
- Things we can put in place before we die which will help our loved ones
- End of life at home
- How to register a death in the Dudley borough

One-page bereavement support leaflets

- For people with internet see printable leaflet resource: <https://lets-get.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Bereavement-A5-leaflet-June-21-internet-1.pdf>
(Also embedded below)
- For those without internet access there is a printable leaflet resource you can print for them that signposts to help that's accessible by phone <https://lets-get.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Bereavement-A5-leaflet-Nov-20-OP-final-version-2.pdf>

"When someone dies" booklet from Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust

This is a rich resource that may be worth printing out to read and be able to share the information with families. It is received by the person who registers the death.

Also available at this link <https://www.rns.uk/russells-hall-hospital-38913-2>

Part 1 is what happens after a death

Part 2 is bereavement care

Visit a Place of Welcome

Places of Welcome are not bereavement-specific settings however, they are friendly, sociable and ideal for anyone who has lost social connections. They are places where anyone can go to see a friendly face, get a free cup of tea and biscuit and a conversation, if and when they need it. They help people connect, belong and contribute. They are great, especially if someone is new to the area or looking to get out and about more. They can help people make new friends and find out about more things going on locally.

Local Places of Welcome are scattered throughout Dudley, with new venues joining all of the time. For your closest one, visit <https://tctogether.org.uk/initiatives/pow> or call one of the team at Transforming Communities Together who help to set up and support Places of Welcome on 07946 711 495.

Need for good self-care using the [Five Ways to Wellbeing](#)

Along with the need for good sleep and a balanced diet, here are simple actions that have a positive impact on day-to-day wellbeing. This is important both for the bereaved person and for those who are supporting them.

Take Notice

The borough has lots of fascinating things and places to see. Take time to explore the sites, nature and geology all around us.

Keep Learning

Learning can boost our self-esteem. We don't have to achieve a new qualification to enjoy the benefits. Learning to cook a different meal or try out some crafts can be just as good.

Be Active

Being more active doesn't just get us fitter, it's also known to make us happier and feel less stressed. Try being active even if it's just for a short period each day and see how much happier you feel.

Connect

Interacting with others is a need we all share. Good relationships and doing activities with others are beneficial for our wellbeing. As a start try visiting a Place of Welcome.

Give

You could volunteer your time to help a cause or just do something kind to help a neighbour. Any kind acts can really boost your self-esteem.

<https://lets-get.com/explore/bereavement/five-ways-to-wellbeing-adult/>

Bereavement information hubs

Help people experiencing bereavement meet other people in a safe, compassionate environment for informal chats. When individuals feel ready, the hubs introduce them to other support if needed. They can also signpost to support services if necessary.

Dudley Bereavement Information Hub

Facilitated by White House Cancer Support the hub aims to support any adult experiencing a bereavement, not just bereavements due to cancer.

Where: White House Cancer Support, 10 Ednam Road, Dudley DY1 1JX

When: Second Monday of the month 2pm – 4pm

To attend, contact: Telephone 01384 231232

Email enquiries@support4cancer.org.uk

Young People's Bereavement Information Hub

For people age 9 to 18 years.

Where: Online (Zoom)

When: 2-4pm fortnightly on Saturdays

How to join: Telephone The What? Centre 01384 379992

Email thewhatcentre@hotmail.co.uk

For more information click [here](#)

Virtual Bereavement Information Hub

Facilitated by Compton Care, the hub aims to support any adult experiencing a bereavement.

When: 10-11.30am Thursday's

Where: Online (Zoom)

To join visit: [Compton Care](#)

<https://lets-get.com/explore/bereavement/bereavement-hubs/>

Mary Stevens Hospice drop-in session for bereavement support

Mary Stevens drop-in sessions offer support and the opportunity to meet others who have also been bereaved. No previous contact with Mary Stevens Hospice is required. They understand there is no timescale for grief and have tailored their bereavement support to meet the needs of the local community. They aim to offer a safe and secure environment to help support people irrespective of how long ago they were bereaved.

The hospice volunteers look forward to welcoming you on the last Thursday of each month:

When: 10.30am-12pm

Where: The Stourbridge Institute Social Club, Market Street, entrance via Bell Street, Stourbridge, DY8 1AE

Mary Stevens Hospice is planning further hubs elsewhere, so do get in touch if you would like to find out more.

Email supporthub@marystevenshospice.co.uk

Telephone 01384 443010 or 01384 445417

<https://lets-get.com/explore/bereavement/organisations-offering-support/mary-stevens-hospice/>

Telephone advice line

Mary Stevens Hospice telephone service offers timely, practical, and compassionate support, including signposting. The telephone information line is available 7-days a week between the hours of 8am-4pm and can be contacted by calling 01384 445417.

<https://lets-get.com/explore/bereavement/organisations-offering-support/mary-stevens-hospice/>

Additional local support and friendship groups

TLC

Bereavement discussion and friendship group, Wednesdays 11am-12pm

Organiser: Anita Tollerton

Where: Chawn Hill Church, Stourbridge DY9 7JD

Telephone: 01384 397287

Email: admin@chawnhillchurch.org.uk

Cherish 'The Biscuit Club'

Bereavement Drop-in, Wednesdays 11am – 12pm

Organiser: Lisa Hyde, counselling practitioner

Where: Parochial Hall, Vicarage Road, Blackheath B62 8HX

Cost: £2.50 per person

Telephone: 07426 170549

Email: lisa123_1972@hotmail.com

A self-funded support group run by a counselling practitioner. Coffee and cake provided. A separate room for sensitive discussions is also available.

The Beacon Befriending Service

Delivered in partnership with Black Country Mental health (formerly Dudley Mind)

A scheme to help reduce isolation and loneliness for older people (65 and over) living in the Dudley area.

Volunteers offer a friendly voice to talk to and help people to link with others and get out for exercise.

To refer:

Telephone: 01902 880111

Email: referrals@beaconvision.org

"Let's Talk"

This service offers a range of support and advice to encourage interaction with others, including one-to-one support (via telephone or face-to-face) group sessions to meet like-minded people and events such as walks, coffee mornings, etc.

Telephone: 07909 213184

Email: E.bchft.letstalk@nhs.net

Dudley Community Information Directory

Find out about activities, groups, clubs, support, health services and more all within Dudley borough at: <https://dudleyci.co.uk/>

At a Loss

Has a national signposting website that allows local groups to advertise their dates and times of meeting.

They also offer the Bereavement Journey as a great place to talk that will help anyone coming to terms with a bereavement (online option as well as local groups). Run in 6 sessions and small

facilitated discussion groups, the Bereavement Journey uses films and discussion to help guide people through the most common aspects of grief. It is for anyone who has been bereaved at any time, and although often run by churches, it is for people of any faith or no faith, as the faith content is confined to the optional 6th and final session which looks at bereavement from a Christian perspective. They also offer an online counselling service

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

Bereavement Expert Patient Programme – facilitated by Dudley Council Public Health

Six-week course for people who have a long-term health condition and are also struggling due to a bereavement. There are options to meet face-to-face, online and by telephone, with support available as needed.

For more information or to book a place:

Telephone: 01384 816437

Email: smp@dudley.gov.uk

<https://lets-get.com/ageing-well/self-management/>

Listening and Guidance Service

For those who may be struggling with illness or who have suffered a bereavement or loss. Up to 4 supportive conversations available through GP referral.

Support after suicide - online book from Public Health England and National Suicide Prevention Alliance

<https://supportaftersuicide.org.uk/resource/help-is-at-hand/>

Please share this resource with the family of someone whose death has been through suicide.

We know that people bereaved by suicide are also at a higher risk of also dying through suicide so we would also like to share these 24/7 helplines:

Samaritans: 116 123

Text: SHOUT to 85258

Black Country Helpline: 0800 008 6516

Emotional health and wellbeing support for faith leaders and celebrants:

All staff who work with those who have been bereaved can benefit from good self-care of their own physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing and by knowing where to turn to get more expert help if needed. Other sources of support may include care from supportive colleagues, mentoring from a more experienced practitioner, or professional supervision.

Professional supervision is an opportunity for supportive reflective practice that can help build resilience in the individual practitioner

If this is something that would be of benefit to your wellbeing in your area of practice and you would like to attend an enquirers' meeting, please email kate@attwoodfunerals.co.uk

Some employers may provide access to counselling services, if needed.

In the NHS the **Black Country Psychological Therapy** services are available to support people experiencing common mental health problems such as low mood, anxiety, stress and depression. <https://www.blackcountryhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/talking-therapies-healthy-minds-services>

For those registered with a Dudley GP, call **Dudley Talking Therapies** on 0800 953 0404 for more information or to self-refer for help with stress, anxiety, depression, worry and low self-esteem.

<https://www.dihc.nhs.uk/find-a-service/dudley-talking-therapy-service>

A free online course in cognitive behavioural therapy from Silver Cloud is also available to help anyone experiencing depression and anxiety.

<https://dudleytalkingtherapy.silvercloudhealth.com/signup/>

Spiritual care team at Black Country Healthcare

Any faith leaders and celebrants who are receiving support for their own health and wellbeing from Black Country Healthcare Trust, can have access to the diverse multi-faith Spiritual Care Team of Chaplains as part of this support. They can self-refer by emailing bchft.spiritualcareteam@nhs.net or phoning 07813 015325 or they can request contact through the healthcare professional supporting them.

Seeking help when needed is a sign of strength and is in the best interest of all involved.

Training offer

People who have been bereaved by suicide are at higher risk of suicide themselves. The following training is available to help you to recognise when someone may be at risk and guide you in responding.

Zero Suicide Alliance Training - FREE, short online modules to help build skills and confidence to support someone who may be considering suicide. <https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/training>

Dudley Wise Steps Suicide Prevention Training – commissioned by Public Health but free to participants, goes into greater depth and provides tools to support people who may be struggling with thoughts of suicide. <https://forwardforlife.org/sptdudley>

Please consider participating in one of both opportunities. It may help you to save a life.

Remember, you can also provide people with these 24/7 helpline numbers in case any thoughts they may have of suicide become overwhelming.

Samaritans: 116 123

Text: SHOUT to 85258

Black Country Helpline: 0800 008 6516

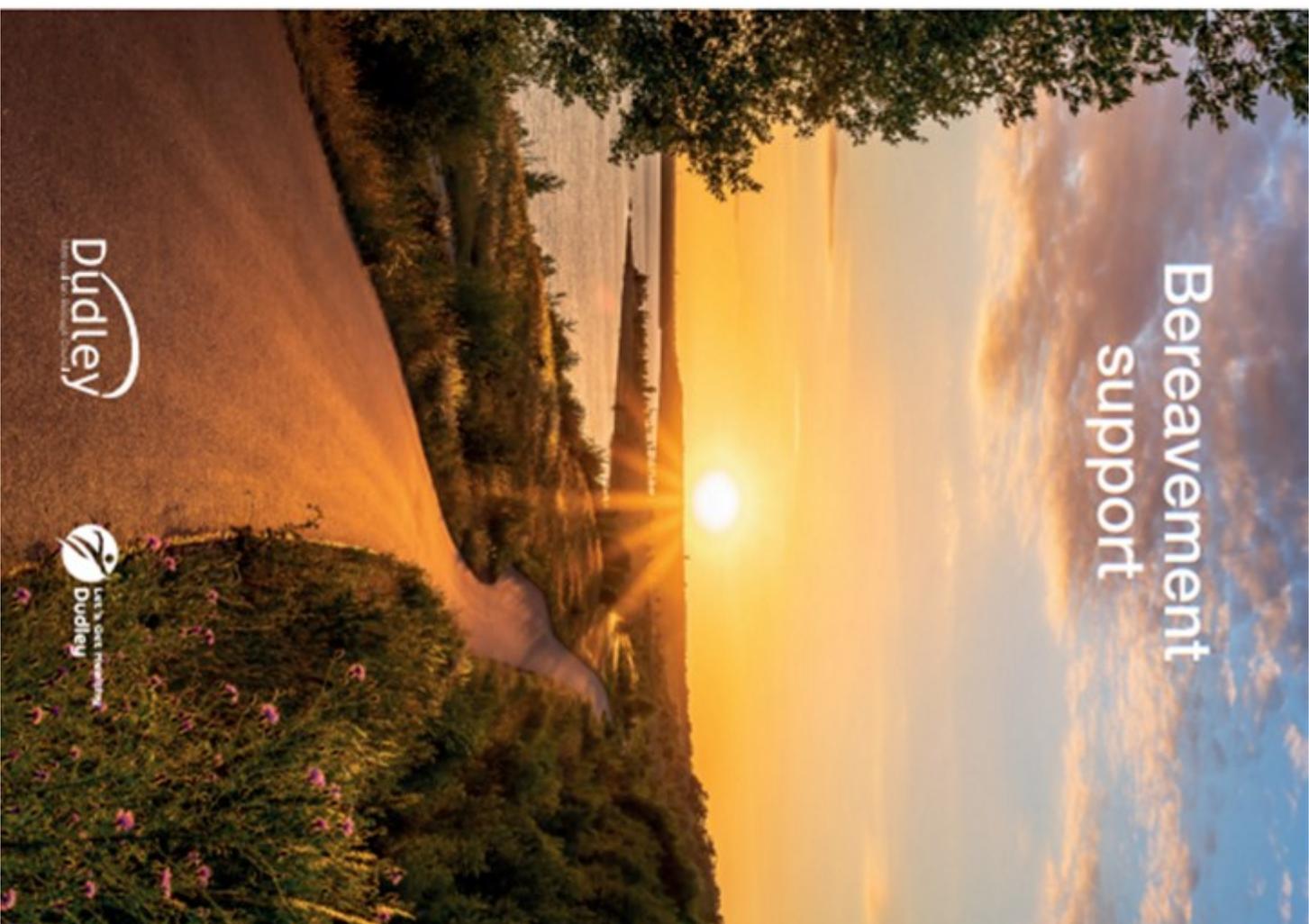
Resource accurate on 01st December 2021

The [Let's Get Bereavement](#) website will be updated with changes as we are aware of them.

Support contacts

Name of organisation	Support offered	Contact/visit
Age UK	Information and services for elderly and their carers	0800 678 1602
At a loss	Signposting the bereaved to support	www.atloss.org
Bereavement Information Hub, Compton Care	Volunteer led local hubs providing information about support services	01902 774 586
Blue Cross	Pet loss support	0300 7909903
Child Bereavement UK	Support for families when a baby or child dies or is dying	0800 028 8840 www.childbereavementuk.org
Citizens Advice Bureau	Free independent and confidential information and advice	0300 3309044
Compassionate Friends	Organisation of bereaved parents and their families offering support	0345 123 2304 www.tcf.org.uk
Cruse	Face-face, telephone, email and website support	0808 808 1677 www.cruse.org.uk
Dudley Community Information Directory	Link to local information	www.dudleyci.co.uk
Dudley Council Plus	Death registration	0300 555 2345 www.dudley.gov.uk
Edwards Trust	Local support to anyone affected by the death of a child (18 or under)	0121 454 1705
Good Grief Trust	Guidance and support	0800 260 0400 www.thegoodgrieftrust.org
Grief Chat	Share experiences, explore feelings and be supported	01524 889 823
Let's get	Supporting you in bereavement and to make healthy lifestyle changes.	www.lets-get.com
Listening and Guidance Service	Up to four supportive phone calls	Referral from your GP
Mary Sevens Hospice	Telephone support line	01384 445417
MNS	Advice, tips and tools to help you make the best choices about your health and wellbeing	www.mns.uk/line-well
Omega	Charterbox action against loneliness and crisis support programme	01743 245088 www.omega.uk/net
Road Peace	Support and information for those bereaved or injured in a road crash	08454 500 355
Samaritans	Confidential, non-judgemental emotional support	116 123
Silverline	Telephone friendship	08004 708 090
Sudden Bereavement Helpline	Help for those affected by a sudden death	0800 2600 400 https://sudden.org/
Survivors of bereavement by suicide	National helpline	0300 1115065 www.uksohs.org
Winston's Wish	Support for children and their families after the death of a parent or sibling	080088 020 021 www.winstonswish.org

If you feel you require further support, then please speak to your GP



Bereavement support



Bereavement support

Grief can seem overwhelming, perhaps especially if the loss or death has been unexpected or traumatic, but grief is a normal human response to the loss of someone that we love. Each of us will experience grief in a different way and how we choose to respond to our grief will also be different for each of us.

We do know that the choices we make can help us to manage our sadness and our grief as well as we can. The following information is there to give you support and information to help you.

Looking after yourself when you are grieving

Coping with the loss of a loved one is always difficult. There is no correct way to act or feel when you experience loss - you feel the way you feel. Everyone is different and feels differently about the loss of a loved one.

Grief can be painful, exhausting and overwhelming but most people find that in time things become easier. As you grieve there are things that you can do to help yourself cope.

These include:

- Learning and understanding more about the process of grief
- Learning strategies to help you stay active
- Making good choices about how you use your time
- Exploring positive lifestyle changes

Grief knocks you off balance. You may find yourself having to cope with a world which feels very different as you go through a process of mourning. Intense feelings including sadness, anger, fear and shame are common; as well as memory and concentration difficulties, exhaustion and lack of motivation.

Whatever your thoughts and feelings it is important to know that powerful feelings are a natural part of the grieving process. Knowing that they are common may help them to seem more normal and not to be feared. It is also important to know that they will pass.

In grief you will experience different kinds of coping and shift back and forth between these two approaches. At times you will face your loss head-on and at others you'll focus on fulfilling practical needs and life tasks.

For many, healing is not a case of 'moving on' from grief, but instead growing around it.

Practical things you can do

Express yourself - Talking is often a good way to soothe painful emotions.

Talking to a friend, family member, trusted work colleague, health professional or counsellor can aid the healing process

Allow yourself to feel sad - It's a healthy part of the grieving process

Maintain a routine - Keeping up simple things like doing the housework can help

Sleep - Emotional strain can make you very tired

Eat healthily - A well balanced diet will help you cope

Looking after yourself - Make sure that you have some time to yourself and do things that you enjoy e.g. meet a friend, go for a walk, visit a nature reserve, have a relaxing bath, etc.

Avoid 'numbing' the pain - Things like alcohol and other substances will make you feel worse once the numbness wears off

Helping ourselves to have better mental wellbeing

There are five simple actions we all can take that have a positive impact on day to day wellbeing.

Take notice

The borough has lots of fascinating things and places to see. Take time to explore the sites, nature and geology all around us.

Keep learning

Learning can boost our self-esteem. We don't have to achieve a new qualification to enjoy the benefits. Learning to cook a different meal or try out some crafts can be just as good.

Be active

Being more active doesn't just get us fitter, it's also known to make us happier and feel less stressed. Try being active even if it's just for a short period each day and see how much happier you feel.

Connect

Interacting with others is a need we all share. Good relationships and doing activities with others are beneficial for our wellbeing. There are lots of ways we can connect more. Try chatting to a neighbour, find a pen friend or join a group.

Give

You could volunteer your time to help a cause or just do something kind to help a neighbour. Any kind acts can really boost your self-esteem.

Supporting someone who is bereaved

Many of us don't have a personal experience of bereavement until we are quite old. We may find that we struggle to know what to say to someone who has been bereaved. We may worry that we may say the wrong thing and add to someone's distress. But saying something like "I'm sorry and I don't know what to say" is far more comforting than saying nothing or avoiding someone.

So, if you know someone who has been bereaved try to:

- Acknowledge the death
- Offer practical support
- Listen if the person wants to talk
- Be honest, open and sympathetic
- Keep in touch