



Bereavement Support

Bereavement

At some time in our lives, we all experience the death of someone special. When someone who mattered to us dies, we experience grief which consists of a whole range of emotions. Grief is natural but it is painful and may bring unexpected feelings or symptoms. Grieving is the struggle to make sense of what has happened and how to adjust to loss.

How you might feel:

It can be difficult to understand the feelings which are experienced as part of this grief and you may feel very different from normal. We do not find it easy to talk about death and our resulting grief, but expressing feelings is important and necessary.

Whether the death was sudden and unexpected or anticipated for some time, you are likely to be in a state of shock. It can be hard to accept the loss. Your life will never be the same again. You may feel numb and events may seem dreamlike and unreal. This is a natural reaction which cushions you against the loss and lets you feel it more gradually. It might be hard to believe that the death has happened and it is not unusual to think you have seen or heard the person who has died.

You might be feeling sad. Grief is physically and emotionally exhausting. Most people are unprepared for how extremely tired they feel. It may be difficult to eat or sleep or you may comfort eat. You may experience lack of concentration, memory loss, physical pain (caused by tension), loss of self-confidence, guilt, panic, withdrawal, self-pity or anger. Sometimes you may feel angry at the person who died. You may feel there is no point in going on and life may seem empty and meaningless. Your emotions may seem unpredictable and you may even think you are going mad. These feelings are quite natural.

These powerful feelings are part of bereavement and do not mean that you are not coping. Remembering and talking about your loved one and sharing your feelings with someone who you confide in can help you to work through your grief.

Sometimes other people, even people you know well, find it difficult or awkward to talk about the person who has died as they do not know what to say or are afraid of upsetting you. They may even seem to avoid you, which feels hurtful. You may remember having done this yourself to someone else in the past who lost their loved one. Try to understand they are not deliberately trying to hurt you. You may need to show them that you want to remember and talk about your loved one and that you need their support. They just need reassurance it is okay to mention your loved one to you.

We come to terms with bereavement in our own way and in our own time because grief is a very individual process. The pain of grief eases, although it may be difficult to believe that this is possible. As time passes, you will begin to make plans and be able to take up your life again although you will never forget the person who has died.

Support

Most people will have family and friends who will support them through this process. However, some people do not want to burden family or friends with their feelings and emotions surrounding their loss. They may need additional support and prefer to speak to someone outwith their usual circle.

As part of the services we provide, we offer support to people after the death of patients for whom we have cared. This bereavement support service is available to people regardless of whether the patient died in the hospice, at home or in hospital, and is offered to all their relatives and friends in a variety of ways. Anyone who has been affected by the death can receive this support from us – it does not need to be a family member, but could perhaps be a friend or neighbour.

A member of our support team can meet with you to give you the opportunity to talk about how you are feeling and for us to

support you through this extremely difficult time. Over a number of meetings, we can help you to start to cope better with your emotions and activities of daily living. Most appointments are available at the hospice. If you would find it too difficult to come in via the reception area, you can be seen in the day care wing which is entered round the back of the building. If you have difficulty with transport, we will try to assist with this. We might be able to visit you at home if coming to the hospice is not an option.

We can facilitate family discussions if there are issues within the family which are causing distress and which are directly related to the loss you have all experienced.

We also offer group support to children and young people (aged 6 – 18 years) affected by the death of someone close. This is an educational, informative and fun group of similarly aged children or young people held in a safe environment.

If you feel you would benefit from talking to someone outwith your family and friends, then we are here to help.

To receive our support, or to find out more about it, please contact Kirsty Freeland, Sally Paul or Stuart Coates in the first instance on **01324 826222** or visit our website at:

www.strathcarronhospice.org

General Information

Strathcarron Hospice is a registered charity providing care and support for people from across the local area with cancer and other serious illnesses. Our dedicated team offers high-quality care for patients, and support for their families and helpers. Our catchment area covers the whole of Forth Valley, and the areas of Cumbernauld and Kilsyth in North Lanarkshire.

We care in a variety of ways according to the patient's individual needs.

Services at the hospice include an In-Patient Unit, Day Care, bereavement support and a Lymphoedema Clinic.

Support is also provided in patients' own homes where Strathcarron Nurse Specialists make over 5000 visits each year.

There is no charge to patients or families for the specialist services we offer. We receive some funds from the NHS but primarily we rely on fundraising activities, voluntary contributions and legacies. If you would like further information on our work, please ask one of our staff.

Strathcarron Hospice

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