

Bereavement help and support

Bereavement follow-up service,
Neurosciences Intensive Care Unit



Compassion / Respect

The death of a person we love is a devastating loss. We can't predict exactly how we will feel, but the pain can be so great that it completely takes over our lives, physically and emotionally.

Everyone responds to their loss in their own way, but there are feelings and experiences that many people share.

We may feel completely numb, or not be able to take in what has happened. The future we expected has changed, and we may feel frightened about what is to come, or just feel that there's no point to anything anymore. Perhaps we even feel guilty about things we once said, or did. We may also feel terribly lonely.

Some people experience other symptoms too, such as:

- finding it hard to eat or sleep
- crying unexpectedly or uncontrollably
- feeling irritable or restless
- not being able to concentrate, or remember things
- avoiding physical intimacy with other people.

When you have lost someone, it is so vital that you care for yourself; that you remember to eat and drink, and to sleep.

You may feel isolated from the people around you, but they will want to help you very much, so do please ask for help, and accept help if it is offered. When you feel ready, consider talking about your feelings with someone close, or perhaps a counsellor.

At the Neurosciences Intensive Care Unit in Oxford we offer a confidential service to help you in the period following your loss.

Six weeks after the death of your loved one, we will contact you. We will ask you some questions, and give you a chance to let us know if you feel you need some help.

Perhaps there were some questions about the care your loved one received while they were with us, that you never felt able to ask: this could prevent you from being able to grieve properly, so it is important that we give you the opportunity to discuss any aspects of their treatment with us.

Although we are not counsellors ourselves, we can put you in touch with organisations that offer counselling and bereavement support. Some of these are below.

Compassionate Friends

Tel: **0845 123 2304**

www.tcf.org.uk

Email for information: info@tcf.org.uk

Helpline email: helpline@tcf.org.uk

Cruse Bereavement Care

Helpline: **0844 477 9400** Monday to Friday 9.30am - 5.00pm

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings open until 8.00pm

Email: helpline@cruse.org.uk

www.crusebereavementcare.org.uk

www.gov.uk

www.gov.uk/browse/births-deaths-marriages/death

This website covers explains what to do when someone dies, and lists local services.

www.ouh.nhs.uk

If you have a specific requirement, need an interpreter, a document in Easy Read, another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221 473** or email **PALSJR@ouh.nhs.uk**

Authors: Sue Condliffe and Bridget Trinder.
May 2015
Review: May 2018
Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust
Oxford OX3 9DU
www.ouh.nhs.uk/patient-guide/leaflets/library.aspx

