

# Time to Talk Befriending

in the heart of the community

## Befriending, Loss and Bereavement

However long you have known someone and whatever their age, the death of a friend can bring with it a range of feelings and emotions. You may have known your befriender for a few months, or for a number of years. You may feel that there was still so much you didn't know about them, or that you had become very close. You may have supported your befriender through some tough times and perhaps their last illness.

Whether your befriender had been ill prior to their death or their death was sudden and took you by surprise, the impact of their loss will be felt as you grieve for this special person and the unique role you had in each other's life. However you feel, it is important that you allow yourself time and space to process your loss.

It is our hope that this resource will help you to reflect on the feelings you may be experiencing at this time. We hope that the content enables you to explore some ideas of how to help yourself and remember your befriender, both now and into the future.

### How you might be feeling

(‘Your bereavement, living through it.’ Sarah Wheatley)

"I just don't know how I will feel from one day to the next."

"It helps me to be able to talk about the person I have lost, not to shut it off."

"The grief still sweeps over me in waves sometimes, even after I thought I was getting used to it."

Everyone experiences grief differently. People often wonder if they are grieving in the ‘right way’ but there is no ‘normal’ or ‘right’ way to grieve.

Whatever you do or do not feel, it is OK and understandable. No one can tell you what you should or should not be feeling. But during a time of loss some of the more common feelings are:

## **SHOCK OR NUMBNESS**

At first you may feel like nothing has changed and it may take a little while for the loss to sink in. This is a defense mechanism of the mind as it tries to protect you from being overwhelmed. It is hard to believe that someone important is not coming back. Many people feel disorientated – as if they have lost their place and purpose in life or are living in a different world. An initial period of shock, numbness, or disbelief that the death has happened is common.

## **PAIN AND SADNESS**

Feelings of sadness and distress following bereavement can be overwhelming and feel almost constant, or the sadness may come and go. Sometimes the sadness may feel that it comes out of the blue, or something seemingly ordinary may bring on a wave of sadness.

## **ANGER**

Anger is a completely natural emotion, typical of the grieving process. You might feel anger towards death, or towards the person who has died. You might also feel angry at yourself for things you did or didn't do, say or didn't say before your befriender's death.

## **RELIEF**

You may have felt some degree of relief, especially if the death follows a long illness. It is possible to feel relief that someone is no longer in pain, whilst also feeling angry and sad that they are no longer alive. Feelings of relief might then lead to feelings of guilt.

## **GUILT**

You may feel guilty that you did not get the chance to say goodbye or for another reason. Guilt is also an emotion we often experience when grieving.

## **LOW MOOD OR DEPRESSION**

You may feel at a low ebb for some time after the death of your befriender and you may find yourself not wanting to do some of the things you used to do together. For a time life can feel like it no longer holds any meaning.

## **SEEING OR HEARING THINGS**

Thinking you are hearing or seeing someone who has died is a common experience and can happen when you least expect it. 'Seeing' the person who has died and hearing their voice can happen because the brain is trying to process the death and acknowledge the finality of it.

**Bereavement can also affect you physically. Losing someone you care about can leave you feeling lacking in motivation, affect your appetite, or your sleep patterns. You may also find yourself withdrawing from activities you usually enjoy. You might also experience muscle tightness, body pains, feel exhausted, lack energy or motivation or you may be restless, can't relax or sit still or become hyperactive.**

# Be Kind to Yourself

It's important that you take care of yourself at this time:

Give yourself time and permission to grieve.

Follow your feelings and if helpful jot these down.

Talk to other people about your befriender, about your memories and your feelings.

Eat well and stay hydrated.

Try to get plenty of rest, even if your sleep is disturbed.

Exercise regularly. Even a breath of fresh air can bring a new perspective.

Take time out to do something that you enjoy and that helps you to relax.

Seek help and support if you feel you need it, whether this is reaching out to a friend, family member, or the Time to Talk Befriending team.

Be honest and tell those around you what you need.

We are often much harder on ourselves than we are on others. If we experience feelings of regret, guilt, or feel that we are weak for needing help, think about how kindly we would speak to a friend who might be feeling like this.

## Remembering your befriender, and celebrating their life

You can shed tears that she / he is gone  
Or you can smile because she / he has lived  
(David Harkins)

There are lots of different ways you can celebrate the life of your befriender and keep their memory alive. Here are just a few suggestions:

**Talk about your befriender and the good times you had together.**

**Put together a playlist of all the songs that remind you of your befriender.**

**Make a note of your memories of time spent with your befriender.**

**Write down memories of the times you spent together and put them all in a box or jar. When you feel low, take a memory out of the box and remember the happy times.**

If you weren't able to say a final goodbye to your befriender or there are things left unsaid then you could try writing a letter to them to express your thoughts and feelings.

Plant a tree (you can do this yourself or through websites that plant trees on your behalf), or buy fresh flowers that will remind you of your befriender.

Create a scrapbook or photobook, or perhaps print one photo to frame.

Make plans for a treat or outing in your befriender's memory. This could be anything from making a particular meal at home, to going for a walk along the prom and getting some fish and chips. The goal is not necessarily to do anything fancy, but to celebrate your befriender's life in a way that has been inspired by the unique person they were.

Write an 'In Memoriam' piece for the Time to Talk Befriending newsletter to celebrate your befriender's life. Get in touch with the team to find out more.

Read a poem or a prayer. You may like to print something out.

### Light a candle.

You could do this at home, or at a church or place of worship. This might be something you choose to do once, or several times, perhaps on the day that marks their birthday.

# HOW LONG WILL IT FEEL LIKE THIS?

We sometimes wonder if we are grieving for the ‘right’ amount of time. Just as there is no ‘right’ way to feel, the timeframe of grief varies from one person to the next. You may feel able to celebrate the life of your befriended right away, or you may feel more able to do so after some time has passed.

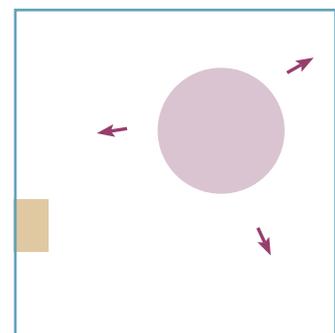
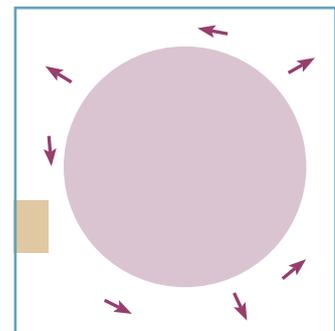
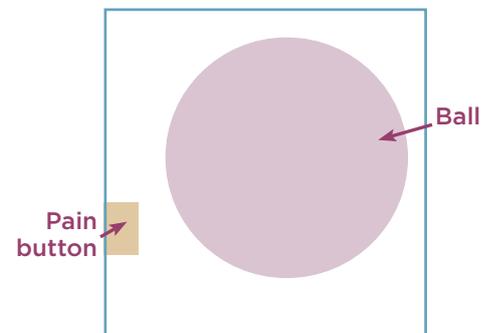
## The ball in the box

The ‘ball in the box’ analogy helps to explain how feelings of grief change over time and can continue to be triggered at random moments. Everyone experiences grief in different ways, with painful emotions often returning at unexpected times. The analogy suggests grief is like a box with a ball in it and a pain button on one side.

In the early stages, the ball is very big. You cannot move the box without it frequently hitting the pain button. It rattles around on its own in there and hits the button over and over again, sometimes so much that it feels like you can’t stop it – you can’t control it – it just keeps hurting.

But as time goes on, the ball gets smaller. It doesn’t disappear completely and when it hits the pain button, it’s just as intense, but generally, it is easier to get through each day.

The analogy can help to be able to talk about how you’re feeling each day. You may say that some days the ball is really big, endlessly hitting the button and you just have to wait until it gets smaller again.



# Further help and support

You are welcome to get in touch with the **Time to Talk Befriending team**, either by phone on **01273 737710** or email **info@tttb.org.uk**. The team will have known the scheme member who has died and will be grieving too.

You can also contact **The Cruse Bereavement Care Freephone National Helpline**, which is staffed by trained bereavement volunteers, who offer emotional support to anyone affected by bereavement. The number is **0808 808 1677**. You can also email **helpline@cruse.org.uk** or you may like to visit their website: **www.cruse.org.uk**

With thanks  
to Claire and  
Charlotte for  
contributing to  
this resource



**Claire Godley**

**Time to Talk Befriending Trustee and Volunteer at Cruse**

Claire is a Time to Talk Befriending Trustee and volunteers with Cruse. She is available to meet or talk over the phone, if helpful.



**Charlotte Evans**

**Story Chaplain**

Encouraging everyday creativity and meaningful moments for people living with dementia, carers and everyone.

---

## FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



Instagram:  
**@tttbcharity**



Twitter:  
**@tttbcharity**



Facebook:  
**Time to Talk  
Befriending/TTTB**

---

**Time to Talk**  
**Befriending**  
in the heart of the community

Time to Talk Befriending, City Coast Centre,  
North Street, Portslade, BN41 1DG

T: 01273 737710

E: info@tttb.org.uk

**www.tttb.org.uk**

Charity Incorporated Organisation Number: 1186555

Design: [ellenstew-art.com](http://ellenstew-art.com)