

GRIEVING, ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

Grief is a natural response to the death of someone significant to you. We all grieve differently depending on our faith, culture, gender, our own personal belief systems and our life experiences. You may find it helpful to know that grieving and mourning can be unpredictable, surprising, frightening or even comforting. We all feel different things and at different times. No two people grieve the same and this is normal. For most of us we learn to live with our loss and grief and this takes time to find a new way of being.

Grieving can feel lonely even with the support of caring family, friends or colleagues. Having the opportunities to be alongside those we are close to, to say our goodbyes or be long side those we care about as they die, can still leave us feeling lost and in pain. Now more than ever we see that managing our grief can feel harder whilst living through Coronavirus, social distancing and the many lockdowns we have been presented with since early 2020.

Therefore you may be feeling that your grief is unseen by others or society as a whole at this time. It is important to remember your grief is significant. All of your feelings, emotions and experiences of grief are always valid and real. At St Leonards Hospice Bereavement Support Team we understand you may be feeling lonely and isolated, maybe you cannot see those who are important to you as you normally would. You may feel frustrated, distressed or even frightened that you cannot give or receive support and love in ways you usually would because of Coronavirus.

Staying Connected and being less isolated whilst living with a loss is challenging. Be reassured that there are still ways you can offer or receive support.

- Write letters or cards to those we care about. We do recognise not having the same opportunities to meet with family and friends face to face as we used to is difficult and this idea may feel like it's 'just not the same' but we would encourage you to try. Keep connected to friends, family and neighbours etc. for your emotional wellbeing and to talk

about the person that has died and talk about how you are feeling. To receive a card or letter can be comforting and fun too.

- Use technology. There are many ways to connect with others if you are grieving; here are just a few ideas using technology: phone calls, text, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Face time, Zoom, Skype.

There are many organisations who offer excellent advice on how to use these technologies and who offer help with isolation and loneliness.

Age UK. <https://ageuk.org.uk>

Cruse Bereavement Care. <https://www.cruse.org.uk>. Helpline: 0808 808 1677.

Mind. <https://mind.org.uk>. Tel: 0208 2152243

Samaritans. <https://www.samaritans.org> Tel: 116 123

Way Up. <https://forum.way-up.co.uk>. Online support group for the over 50's

Widowed and Young. <https://www.widowedandyoung.uk>.

Support, understanding and friendship for those before 51st birthday.