

Bereavement Support

St Leonard's Bereavement Support Service exists to provide a confidential listening service for bereaved adults living within the Hospice catchment area. **Our service is available to anyone whether connected to Hospice services or not.** We provide a confidential and safe space, through a variety of different options, for you to share, express, and understand your grief.

We are responsive to each individual's faith, culture, and personal circumstances recognising and respecting that each person is unique.

We make no charge for this support and we will work with you to find the most appropriate support for your needs.

The death of someone close to you can be an emotionally traumatic experience and there may be intense emotions that are not easy to cope with. Whilst many bereaved people come through grief with the help of family and friends, for some people, extra support can be helpful.

Bottling-up difficult feelings can have a detrimental effect upon us both emotionally and physically.

Grief

Grieving is a normal and natural part of life as a result of experiencing a loss or bereavement. It may involve you needing to express your deepest feelings, find ways to adapt to your changed circumstances and life and eventually come to live with the reality that your relative/loved one/friend has died.

Grief can take many forms and last for different lengths of time for different people. Some people experience deep emotion, and others work through their grief in more practical ways.

You may experience:

- Shock, disbelief, denial
- Deep sadness and sometimes later, depression
- Anger and guilt
- Feeling of acceptance

How is a listening service different from counselling?

Counselling can only be provided by specifically qualified counsellors who study at an academic level, gaining a very specific qualification in counselling or psychotherapy and are registered with the BACP (British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists) or similar.

Our team are intensively trained in listening skills and other communication approaches but we do not offer counselling. We only work with bereavement and not other intense and complicated issues dealt with by a counsellor.

Many people find it helpful to talk and openly share their feelings and experiences. Doing so can be cathartic and healing. Active listening provided by our trained, skilled, and experienced team of volunteers offers a safe, confidential, and supportive opportunity through which you may wish to explore your own experiences and how to best respond to them. It's a bit like a 'sounding board.'

Our Bereavement Support Team will work alongside you, guide and encourage you to share your own story with the aim of helping you understand your grief and work through your feelings and emotions.

We aim to help you to be independent from our services rather than dependent; to eventually gain acceptance of what has happened and to learn to live with your grief and loss and to come to a point in your grief whereby you can slowly adapt to life again.

When referring yourself for one-to-one support we will schedule a convenient time to take your referral over the telephone. This referral assessment call will take around 60 minutes to complete. This can be an emotional conversation for you so it's important you are kind to yourself afterwards. Once your referral has been completed, you will be allocated to the most appropriate Bereavement Support Volunteer, when they become available.

To seek counselling you might wish to speak with your GP or the following websites are places to search for a private counsellor:

www.acc-uk.org

www.bacp.co.uk

www.counselling-directory.org.uk

If you need to speak with someone urgently call:

The Samaritans

Listening Service

116 123 (24 hours)

This number is FREE from ANY phone