

## Can I use this service?

Anyone who is being or has been cared for by Countess Mountbatten Hospice can access this service. Family members and friends are welcome too.

We offer bereavement support even when your relative or friend was cared for outside the hospice. You can ask your GP to refer you, or you can contact the service yourself.

This leaflet explains about grief and the support available to you through Countess Mountbatten's Psychology and Bereavement Service. We hope we have answered the most commonly asked questions. If you need further information about this service, please contact us by calling 02380 475 310.

Information for patients, carers  
and visitors

# About our Psychology and Bereavement Service

Providing psychological and emotional  
support for patients, their families and carers



Countess  
Mountbatten  
Hospice

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Countess Mountbatten Hospice is a  
registered charity 1123304



Countess  
Mountbatten  
Hospice

## Psychological and Bereavement

**Services** provide support to patients with life-limiting illnesses, as well as their family members and carers.

Dealing with the reality of a life-limiting illness can be devastating. You may react by feeling angry, sad, or guilty. It can affect your memory, concentration, motivation, thoughts and beliefs.

Patients and their loved ones may feel anticipatory grief: grief caused by knowing they will be parting from those they care for. Strong physical reactions may occur such as extreme tiredness, changes in appetite, problems with sleeping, for example.

It can become harder to concentrate and remember. People may start to withdraw from others and become more isolated.

Emotional feelings can be ones of hopelessness, anger, shock, guilt, disbelief, anxiousness and depression. Some of these are described in more detail below.

**Bereavement** – a natural response following the death of another person. The death of a friend or relative can be devastating and can at times seem unbearable.

**Grief** – what we feel when someone dies. There is no right and wrong way to grieve. There are though some common feelings people may experience.

**Shock** – it can be hard to believe that someone has died. Shock can leave you feeling numb and confused. It may take some time to be able to make sense of a person's death and to realise that they are not coming back.

**Physical feelings** – people can experience physical changes to their appetite or sleep routine and can experience physical illness and pain.

**Sadness** – sadness and, at times, a depressed mood are common experiences. The meaning previously found in life can be lost for a time and people can even feel like they want to die too.

**Loneliness** – people can feel completely alone, partly because of the loss of the person and the role they had in their life, but also because they feel others do not understand or are expecting them to recover and carry on with living.

**Guilt** – at times, people may wish they had spent more time with the person who has died or wish they could have done something to alleviate their pain or suffering. Guilt can also be experienced if someone has had a difficult or confusing relationship with the person who has died.

**Anger** – this can be experienced when it is hard to make sense of the circumstances of someone's death, or when the death seems unjustified or unfair. People can feel angry with themselves, other people, the person who has died, or the world in general.

**Longing** – wanting the person back is a common experience. At times, people may think they have seen or heard the person who has died. These experiences can be comforting, frightening or confusing, but they are a way in which the brain is trying to process and make sense of the death.

**Relief** – sometimes people feel relieved that the person who has died is no longer suffering.

## What support is available?

Sometimes it can help to talk to someone independent who is trained to listen and support you through illness or grief.

We have expert Clinical Psychologists and counsellors, who offer individual and group sessions and our bereavement and support volunteers are trained, supported and supervised by these specialists.

## How much support will I need?

Some people will need only one or two sessions; others require longer-term support. For **bereavement** support we usually offer up to six sessions of up to one hour. You will be invited to attend a bereavement group for up to a year.

All support given is confidential.

A bereavement group is held at the hospice every month. It provides the opportunity to meet other people who have suffered a similar loss.

Memorial services are held throughout the year. You will usually be invited to attend one about six months after your loss.