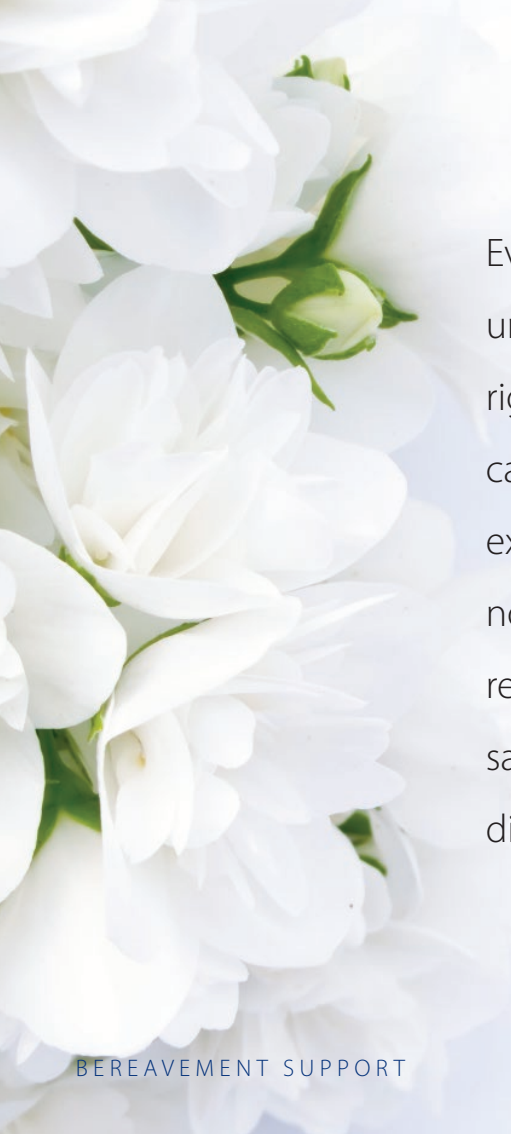


Bereavement Support

Living
with grief





Everyone's grief experience is unique and personal. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Grief can be unpredictable and we may experience emotions we have not felt before. Reactions and responses to grief can range from sadness, overwhelming emotions, discomfort or feelings of relief.

What is Grief?

Grief is a normal and natural reaction and response (physical, mental, emotional and spiritual) to death and loss. While grieving, we are trying to come to terms with the *loss and changes in our life resulting from the death of a significant person*. We are learning to adjust to their absence and at the same time, find new ways of connection with them. Grief is not something we must overcome, it is rather a life experience. Grief is a vital part of our human growth.

How Long Does Grief Last?

This is different for everyone. There is no time frame nor are there stages of grief after the death of someone close. Grief takes as long as it takes. Just as we take time to establish a relationship with someone, learning to live with our loss takes time. This time we call, '*bereavement*'. How the person close to us has died and other losses we may have experienced gives shape to our grieving and its timeframe.

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What Are the Experiences of Grief?

Grief experiences may be many and varied. They can occur for several months or even years after the death. We give ourselves the space to mourn, grieve and honour our relationship with those who have died. Each situation is different.

As frightening as the pain and loss can be, *most of us are resilient*. We may be shocked, even wounded by the loss. We may feel deeply saddened and/or hurt and we may feel adrift or lost for some time. However, *we will find our way back to functioning and enjoying life*.

Grief is a human experience. Grief is tolerable because it comes and goes. We move back and forth emotionally. We focus on the pain of the loss, its implications, its meanings and then our minds swing back toward the immediate world, other people, and what is going on in the present.

We are given respite from the pain by staying connected to other people who help us gradually adapt to the loss. Most of us get through loss and grief from relying on our own resources, *finding and making meaning* in the experience.



Regardless of what the relationship was actually like, being able to accept the finality of the loss and find comfort in memories of that person helps us along. We know the person has died, but in thinking and talking about them, we find we have not lost everything. We can maintain an *enduring bond* with the one who has died.

*Death does not end the story.
Death does not end the relationship.*

CARE, COMPASSION, CHOICE

A decorative background of white flowers, possibly lilies, is visible on the left side of the page. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some showing green buds and others fully open with white petals.

Help with Grief

Most of us learn to live with our experiences of grief and bereavement with the support of family and friends who are sensitive and non-judgemental and our own resources. Grief provides an opportunity for deeper human connection.

The Bereavement Consultancy service is a free of charge resource providing support, someone to talk to, information and counselling referral (if required). When grieving we need different kinds of support at different times during our bereavement. We offer a range of suggestions and resources that will assist you in understanding the grief and bereavement experience.

Talking about grief and bereavement, eases its intensity and our sense of aloneness or isolation.

For a confidential enquiry please contact Patricia Thomas, Bereavement Consultant on (02) 9649 6423 or patriciat@catholiccemeteries.com.au



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T: 1300 114 997 www.catholiccemeteries.com.au/bereavement-support