

# **Strawberry Hill Medical Centre**

## **Bereavement Support**

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Firstly, please accept our deepest condolences to you and your family at this very sad time.

Strawberry Hill Medical Centre has designed this leaflet for anyone who has experienced a bereavement either recent or in the past.

### What Practical Things Need to be Done if There is a Death?

When someone dies at home a doctor must be called to sign a medical certificate. If the death is sudden, the doctor will have to talk to the police who will report it to the coroner. A post mortem examination may be arranged.

When someone dies in hospital, the doctor there will give you a medical certificate.

Once you have the medical certificate, you must take it to the registry office and register the death within five days. The registrar will issue a death certificate and notification of release, which should be given to the funeral director. Ask for a few copies of the death certificate. You may need these for pension and Insurance purposes.

A funeral director can be chosen before or after you have registered the death. Most people obtain a name from the telephone directory or by word of mouth. He or she will advise on the procedures for the funeral.

Contact your local Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to arrange pension and other entitlements. You may be eligible for funeral payment or widow's payment. The Directgov website [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) provides information about benefit entitlement.

Inform the tax office about your change in circumstances.

You may want to put a death notice in the local or national papers.

If there is a will, the executors will make sure it is carried out. Contact a solicitor. If there is no will, contact the Probate Registry for an application to administer the 'estate'. Your local Citizens' Advice Bureau can help you if you are not sure.

## Understanding Grief

Serious loss is something which we all face at some time in our lives. This may be because of the death of someone close to us or it may be because of other circumstances such as the loss of our health or home.

Many of us will not experience bereavement or loss until later in life and may have little opportunity to learn about death and about how people are affected by grief. It can be difficult to know what is 'normal' when we face a loss.

You may think you are the only person who has felt the way you do. Whilst everyone's response to a loss is a very individual experience, there are some common experiences that many people will share.

## How Do People Feel?

People often describe shock soon after the death of a loved one. They may feel numb, panicky, very weepy or unable to cry at all. Some people find it difficult to sleep, others may have physical symptoms such as heart palpitations.

Some people find they calmly go through the practical tasks surrounding the death, and worry that they may be seen as uncaring. This is just one of the signs of shock and is it mostly likely that they will feel the impact of the death at a later point.

Some people find themselves completely unable to cope and need a lot of practical and emotional support from those around them at this point.

## In the Days/Weeks/Months Following a Bereavement:

Don't make major changes in your life, such as selling your house, moving areas, jobs etc. until you have had time to adjust to the death. This is a time when many people may make changes they can regret.

Do make sure you look after your own health. This is a time when you become very prone to illness. Eat well, rest properly, take extra care.

Talk to people about how you feel. Don't bottle things up. Ask for help if you are not coping.

If your health is not good, consult your doctor.

Keep up contacts and relationships. Accept invitations, invite people to visit, keep in touch with family and friends. Find out about local events, clubs and classes.

Do not enter into new financial arrangements without proper advice. Talk to a friend or an advice organisation such as Citizens Advice.

If you feel you are stuck or not coping at all well with your grief then contact your doctor to discuss this. Other organisations which may help are listed at the back of this booklet.

## Checklist of People you may need to Notify

- Probate Office       Deceased person's GP
- Bank/Building Society       Credit card companies
- Employer       Department of Work & Pensions
- Inland Revenue       Insurance companies
- Solicitor       Vehicle licensing (DVLA)
- Council Tax Office       TV Licensing
- Rental companies       Household utilities (water, gas etc)
- Pension providers       Mortgage providers
- Social Services       Council Housing Office
- Royal Mail deliveries       Trade Union
- Clubs/Associations       Newsagent/Milkman etc

## Checklist of Items that may need returned/Cancelled

- Pension/benefits book       Driving licence
- Passport       Library books/tickets
- Season tickets       National Insurance card

**Child Bereavement Trust**

Tel: 0845 357 1000

[www.childbereavement.org.uk](http://www.childbereavement.org.uk)

Information for bereaved children and families

**Child-Death Helpline**

Tel: 0800 282 986

Helpline based at Great Ormond Street Hospital, offering information and advice following the death of a child.

**Compassionate Friends**

Tel: 0117 953 9639

[info@tcf.org.uk](mailto:info@tcf.org.uk)

Helpline run by bereaved parents.

Open every day 10am - 10.30pm.

**The Cot Death Society**

Tel: 01635 861771

**Cruse Bereavement Care**

Tel: 0844 477 9400

[www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

Cruse is a support group for all bereaved people.

**Daisy's Dream**

Tel: 0118 934 2604

[www.daisysdream.org.uk](http://www.daisysdream.org.uk)

Support service for bereaved children in the Berkshire area.

**Foundation for the study of infant deaths**

Tel: 0118 934 2604

[www.sids.org.uk](http://www.sids.org.uk)

**SAMM**

Tel: 0207 735 3838

A self-help group for those bereaved by homicide.

**SOBS**

Tel: 01235 863060

Helpline for survivors of bereavement by suicide.

**Stillbirth & Neonatal Death Society**

Tel: 0207 436 5881

**Sudden Death Association**

Tel: 0118 988 9797

Organisation for relatives and friends of people who die suddenly.

**Terrence Higgins Trust**

Tel: 0207 242 1010

Helpline for AIDS/HIV sufferers and their families and friends.

**Winston's Wish**

Tel: 0145 239 4377

Information and advice for bereaved children.

**Young Widows & Widowers Association**

Tel: 0292 071 1209

[www.youngwidowsandwidowers.org](http://www.youngwidowsandwidowers.org)

This group aims to serve the needs of younger widowed people.

## Other Useful Telephone Numbers

### **Citizens Advice**

16 Bartholomew St, Newbury RG14 5LL

Tel: 01635 516605

### **The Registrar of Births & Deaths**

Shaw House, Church Road, Newbury RG14 2DR

Tel: 01635 279230

### **Social Services**

Tel: 01635 503090

### **The Samaritans**

Tel: 0845 790 9090

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

### **National Association of Bereavement Services**

Tel: 0207 709 9090

### **National Bereavement Helpline**

Tel: 0845 226 7227

**Strawberry Hill Medical Centre  
August 2018 v.1.1**

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