

The funeral itself marks a particular moment as life changes after the death of someone you knew and love. As time goes on after the funeral, the experience of grief continues. Read on for some help and guidance about what grief might be like.

Journey through Grief

Going through grief is sometimes described as a journey. Like a journey, it is a process and so involves changes over time. But, unlike most journeys, it doesn't really have a clear end point. And even its starting point can sometimes be vague.

Each grief journey is unique, affected by many things, including:

- the circumstances of the death
- the relationships of the people involved and
- the personality and past experiences of the person who has been bereaved.

The process of grief takes longer for some people than for others. The grief journey may be longer if the death:

- occurred without warning
- involved a child
- was particularly horrifying or
- is not certain or has no clear focus eg if a person has gone missing.

Starting the journey

A sudden, unexpected death means that the start of the grief journey is clear. But, when death follows a long illness, the grieving process may begin gradually, before the person has died.

At the time of a bereavement, people often say they feel numb. They may 'feel in limbo' during the time between the death and the funeral.

Ordinary life is put 'on hold' and they feel as if they are just 'going through the motions' of life.

Once friends and relatives have gone home after the funeral, bereaved people can feel especially lonely. Life seems very empty and they often wonder whether they will ever get to feel any better.

Gradually, they start doing ordinary things again, such as returning to work, tackling jobs in the home and dealing with paperwork. But life does not 'return to normal'. 'Normal' has changed forever.

Moving on through the journey

Most bereaved people go through a number of different emotions. But they do not go through them in neat stages. They may move back and

forth between a range of feelings.

Grief is tiring and can feel like

- being frightened or
- involve feelings of shame or guilt or of
- irritability or downright anger.

Grief is natural and many people go through the grief journey with just the support of family and friends. Others value the support of trained counsellors or listeners.

There are many organisations which can help with grief, these are just a few:

[At A Loss](#)

[Cruse](#)

[Care for the Family](#)

[NHS](#)

[Bereavement UK](#)

[Child Bereavement Charity](#)

[Child Death Helpline](#) – there to listen to and support anyone affected by the death of a child.

[Grief encounter](#) – which supports children who have lost someone they love

[SANDS](#) – Still Birth & Neonatal Death charity

[Winston's Wish](#) – a charity for bereaved children

Some churches have counsellors who specialise in supporting people after a bereavement. Churches can also point people towards other local bereavement services.

The journey's end

As time goes on, bereaved people find they can speak of the person who died without tears or deep emotion. They notice their interest in hobbies returning and can look outwards to the world and its possibilities. Eventually, they can laugh and love and find reasons to live again.



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