

Coping with Talk of Death and Dying

Death and bereavement are an inevitable part of life and yet they are rarely talked about. The unpredictability of life means we can never be sure when we will face the challenge of this major life event. However, during the current global COVID-19 pandemic, we are living in unprecedented times full of uncertainty, challenge, limitation and sadly, the tragedy of death.



Currently, we cannot escape news and discussion focusing on death and dying during the coronavirus crisis. It may bring up difficult feelings for all of us, but some people struggle more with this than others. This may include: those with existing mental health issues or painful memories of past bereavements, or other recent losses.

This shared experience of grief may actually feel comforting but, conversely, may also feel overwhelming and difficult at times, adding to anxiety levels. It may also add another layer of pain for those bereaved by the loss of their own loved ones during this challenging time.

Helpful ways to look after yourself:

- Set yourself boundaries (perhaps once or twice a day) and time limits on time with the news about the pandemic, either in the press, online, on television, on the radio, social media
- Try asking friends or relatives to talk about other things for a while
- Keep to a regular daily routine, including time to relax
- Find time for welcome distractions such as hobbies and interests you can participate in at home such as music, watching films or TV, reading, arts and crafts, gardening, or DIY.

Regular contact with others:

- Given the current restriction of social distancing and isolation, it is still important to try and find ways of remaining in contact with family and friends. This can feel supportive, and help you through this difficult time even though you cannot visit each other directly.
- Use whatever method you have access to, and which feels comfortable for you, such as the various video options readily available or a phone call or text.



Where can I get help?

Speaking to your GP can sometimes be helpful if you find that your distress becomes overwhelming. Your GP may suggest speaking to a counsellor as a way of helping you to adjust to the current situation. Speaking to a counsellor is available via the EAP helpline. For cases where it is too early to receive counselling the helpline can provide information on the practical issues you may be experiencing. In the longer term, your GP may suggest medication if your anxiety levels become unmanageable.

Useful Websites

Cruse: England, Wales, Northern Ireland

This includes links to other sources of support for all grieving in the family, and also covers funerals.

www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/coronavirus-dealing-bereavement-and-grief

Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland

This includes links to other sources of support for all grieving in the family and also covers funerals.

www.crusescotland.org.uk/2-uncategorised/84-covid-19.html

Mind: England and Wales

www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/

Support in Mind Scotland

www.supportinmindscotland.org.uk/Listing/Category/coronavirus-support-guidance

MindWise Northern Ireland

www.mindwisenv.org/info-support/covid-19/

Care for the Family

Useful information on how others can help the bereaved

www.careforthefamily.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/bereavement-how-other-people-can-help.pdf

The Inter Faith Network for the United Kingdom

<https://www.interfaith.org.uk/news/faith-communities-and-coronavirus>

Stonewall LGBT support: England, Scotland, Wales

www.stonewall.org.uk/about-us/news/covid-19-%E2%80%93-how-lgbt-inclusive-organisations-can-help