

Coping with  
**grief and loss**

while you are in prison



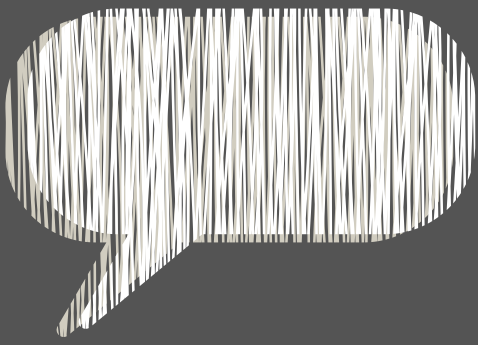
Whenever the loss of a friend or loved one happens, it can be an extremely difficult time.

It can be particularly hard to grieve properly in prison, due to not having close friends or your family to talk to or not enough space to let your emotions out.

If someone close to you has died, this leaflet may help you to make sense of some of the feelings that you may be experiencing.

You will also find more information on where to seek support if you want to talk to someone.





# Talk about it

## **There are lots of people who can help you**

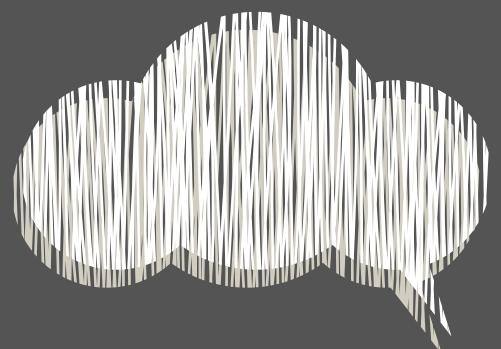
Find someone you can talk to your cell mate, wing staff, chaplaincy, your key worker, friends or family, your GP, a counsellor or even a bereavement support organisation.

Many of them will have lost loved ones themselves so they may understand something of how you might feel.

## **Please tell someone**

The most important thing is that you tell someone that a loved one has died, particularly if you are having thoughts of harming yourself.

People need to be aware of what is going on so they can help you and also so that can understand if there is a change in your mood or behaviour.





# What you might be feeling

Feelings of loss and grief are very personal. People's different faith and cultural backgrounds may result in different ways and expressions of grief and loss.

The following emotions and physical feelings are very common:

## Physical reactions

Headaches or stomach aches

Lack of energy

Poor sleep or sleeping a lot

No appetite or over-eating

More easily angered or upset

Having nightmares

Can't concentrate or remember things

## Emotions

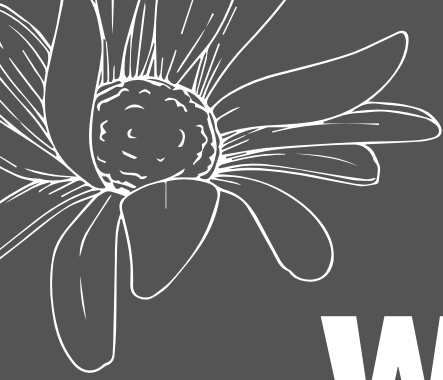
Pain and sadness

Shock

Guilt

Anger

Fear



# What are the stages of grief?

**Denial**  
**Anger**  
**Bargaining**  
**Depression**  
**Acceptance**

These are all known as the stages of grief, and it is normal to feel these things. They will usually pass in time.

Not everyone experiences these in the order in which they are set out. You may find you move back and forth between stages, such as between anger and depression.

There is no right way to grieve and it is different for everyone. It is important to try to take each day at a time and to do what you know is right for you. Everyone has their own way of grieving and managing loss.





# **What can you do to help yourself?**

Here are some suggestions about how to look after yourself and what can help you to cope:

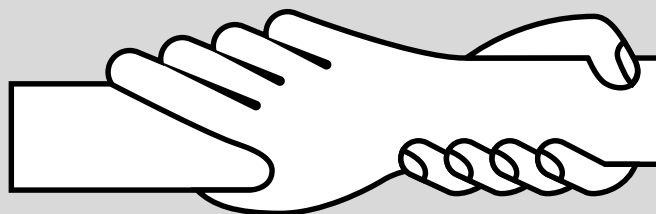
**Take one day at a time and allow yourself to grieve. Doing this can help you to adjust and move forward.**

**Be willing to accept help.**

**Look after yourself. Try to eat properly and to rest, even if you can't sleep.**

**Don't be embarrassed about crying.**

**Talk to someone about how you feel. This can be an important part of the healing process.**





# Reaching out for support

Remember, you do not have to go through this alone. You can speak to whoever you have a good relationship with that might be your family, friends or other people that you are close to outside of prison.

If you have limited PIN credit talk to staff as you may be able to have a compassionate phone call using a prison phone.

## **Prison support**

Support can also come from a variety sources in prison including: **Listeners, peer supporters, key workers, safety-teams, wing staff, managers**



# Chaplaincy



Prison is a hard place in which to grieve. You might also realise that you are carrying grief from a long time ago. Counselling can help and the chaplaincy are happy to talk to you about this.

Prison chaplains are available to help you whether you have a religion or not. They will not judge you or question what you believe.

You can also ask them to have a celebration or memorial service which could held in the chapel after the social distancing restrictions are lifted and at a time when attendance and shared mourning can safely take place.



# National Helplines

There are external organisations who can also help you.

## **Cruse Bereavement Care**

This organisation provides bereavement support and counselling for adults, young people and children. It is free to call them on this number **0808 808 1677**.

## **Samaritans**

Samaritans provides confidential emotional support to people in prison through its 24-hour helpline. You can call Samaritans for free at any time using the dedicated prison number **0845 450 7797**.

