

Bereavement:
**finding meaning
after loss**

northlondonhospice.org



The death of someone significant can affect people in unexpected ways. Grief is a natural and normal reaction but can cause big changes, both emotionally and physically.

Although bereavement is inevitable, how we respond can vary according to our situation, background, beliefs, or our previous experiences of loss. There's no 'normal' way to grieve, or any expected way we should feel, or any set time to start feeling more like ourselves again. Our feelings can also be affected by the circumstances of the death, or the relationship we had with the person who died. It is important to allow yourself to respond in your own way.

Adapting and learning to cope when someone has died can be challenging. There will be significant days to get through such as birthdays and holidays, and relationships with remaining family members to be re-negotiated.

Whilst lots of people have support networks, it can be difficult to express your thoughts and feelings, especially with friends and family. However, sharing how you feel with someone, or meeting others in a similar situation can be helpful.

North London Hospice Bereavement Service

We offer a range of free support options for family members of individuals who were cared for by a North London Hospice clinical service in either Barnet or Enfield. Alongside this, North London Hospice supports the communities of these boroughs with Grief Cafés.

If you would like to access support, please complete the self-referral form located at the back of this booklet and return it to us.

Alternatively, you can complete the form online via our website, request a form by emailing the Bereavement Support team on **nlhbereavement@northlondonhospice.co.uk**, or you can call us on **0800 368 7848** and we'll be happy to assist you.

Grieving the loss of someone close is a deeply personal and often overwhelming experience, and while everyone's journey through grief is unique, you don't have to face it alone. Bereavement support offers a compassionate space to help you navigate the emotional, mental and physical impact of loss. It provides a safe environment to express your feelings without judgment, helping you make sense of your emotions and reassuring you that what you're experiencing is a natural part of grieving. Support can also reduce feelings of isolation by connecting you with others who understand, while promoting overall wellbeing and helping you manage the stress and anxiety that often accompany grief.

Over time, it can empower you to find new ways of coping, honour the memory of your loved one, and gently move forward at your own pace. Whether through one-to-one conversations, group support, or simply having someone to listen, bereavement support can be a vital part of healing and rediscovering hope.

Quotes throughout this booklet come from bereaved people we have worked with

We offer:

Individual Support

We offer the opportunity to speak with a trained volunteer or staff member by phone, in person or via a virtual platform. Our sessions:

Sessions:

- are usually 50 minutes long
- initially up to six sessions are offered, at a frequency to meet your needs
- on-going support can be provided, if required

You may wish to have a one-off session to talk about what has happened.

"I try not to break down in front of my family and I tend not to talk about things but bottle my feelings up"

It's completely natural and deeply human to break down and cry in front of family when you're grieving the loss of someone close. Grief doesn't follow a script, and moments of overwhelming emotion can come unexpectedly, especially when you're surrounded by people who shared that connection. Crying in front of others isn't a sign of weakness; it's a reflection of the love, pain and depth of your bond with the person who has died.

Sometimes, we try to hold ourselves together for the sake of others, especially family, but allowing yourself to be vulnerable can actually create space for deeper connection and mutual support. Your tears may even give others permission to express their own grief, helping everyone feel a little less alone in their sorrow.

Please be gentle with yourself. Grief is not something to be managed or hidden - it's something to be felt, shared, and honoured. And if you ever feel like you need someone to talk to outside of your family, support is always available.

Groups

Our Walk and Talk groups offer a gentle and informal way to connect with others who are also navigating grief. Held regularly in local parks, these walks provide a calm and supportive environment where you can share your thoughts, reflect quietly, or simply enjoy the presence of others who understand what it means to experience loss.

There's no pressure to talk, just the opportunity to walk side by side with trained volunteers and fellow participants in a peaceful, natural setting. Whether you're looking for a listening ear, a moment of connection, or simply some fresh air and movement, these walks are here to support your wellbeing.

Everyone is welcome, and we understand that taking the first step can feel daunting. You're encouraged to join at your own pace, in your own time. Sometimes, just being with others who "get it" can bring a sense of comfort and ease that words alone can't provide.

"I feel very lonely and I want to get back to normal"

When the time feels right, gently re-engaging with old interests, or even exploring new ones, can be an important part of healing. These activities can bring moments of joy, a sense of purpose, and a connection to life beyond grief. There's no rush, and no pressure, just small steps, taken at your own pace, toward rediscovering what brings you comfort and meaning.

"I feel stressed, tired and ill"

Grief can affect every part of our being - emotionally, mentally and physically. It's not uncommon to feel overwhelmed, exhausted, or even physically unwell after the loss of someone close. These responses are a natural part of the grieving process and a reflection of the deep connection you had with the person who has died.

You may find it difficult to concentrate, sleep, or carry out everyday tasks. Feelings of stress, anxiety, or even numbness can come and go in waves. These are all valid and understandable reactions to loss.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve, and no set timeline for how long it should take. Everyone's journey is different. What matters most is giving yourself permission to feel what you feel, without judgment.

Support is available if and when you need it. Whether it's talking to someone, joining a group, or simply taking small steps toward self-care, you don't have to go through this alone.

Grief Café

We host regular gatherings at our Grief Café, open to all of those in Barnet and Enfield, offering a relaxed and informal environment where individuals can come together over a cup of tea. These meet-ups are supported by trained volunteers who provide compassionate emotional support and a listening ear. Whether you're seeking comfort, conversation, or simply a sense of community, our Grief Café is a space where you are warmly welcomed and never alone.

"I keep thinking they are going to come back"

After losing someone close, it's not unusual to feel as though they might still walk through the door at any moment. You may find yourself listening for their voice, expecting to see them in familiar places, or even catching yourself thinking, "I need to tell them this." These moments can be both comforting and painful, a reflection of how deeply they were woven into your everyday life.

This feeling doesn't mean you're not accepting the loss. It's a natural part of grief. Your heart is still catching up to what your mind knows. When someone has been such a constant presence, it takes time to adjust to their absence. And even as you begin to find a new rhythm in life, that longing may still surface from time to time.

In time, you will find a way to live without them physically by your side. But that doesn't mean they're gone from your life. They will

always be with you in your thoughts, your memories, the stories you tell and the quiet moments that remind you of them. The love you shared doesn't end; it simply changes form.

Grief is not about forgetting or moving on, it's about learning how to carry the love and the loss together. And in doing so, you keep their presence alive in a way that is meaningful and lasting.

"When is the right time to move his things?"

One of the most tender and difficult moments in grief can be deciding when, or whether, to move or pack away the belongings of someone who has died. There is no "right" time to do this. It's a deeply personal decision, and the timing will be different for everyone.

You might feel pressure, either from others or from within yourself, to take action quickly. But grief doesn't follow a schedule, and neither should this process. It's okay to leave things as they are for a while. Sometimes, just seeing their belongings can bring comfort, a sense of closeness, or help you feel connected to their memory.

More support options available to you

Spiritual Care

Whether or not you follow a particular religious faith, you may find comfort in exploring spiritual questions or simply having someone to talk to about the deeper aspects of loss and meaning. Our chaplains and trained volunteers are here to offer a compassionate, non-judgmental space where you can reflect, ask questions, or just be heard. You are welcome to reach out at any time, in whatever way feels right for you.

Celebration of Life Events

At North London Hospice, we hold special remembrance ceremonies to honour and celebrate the lives of those we have cared for. These gatherings offer a gentle space for reflection, connection and shared memory, and are open to families and loved ones who wish to take part.

Ceremonies are held both virtually and in person at our Finchley and Enfield sites, allowing you to choose the setting that feels most comfortable. A member of your family will receive an invitation to attend, with a request to share the details with others who may wish to join.

For upcoming dates and times, please visit the **North London Hospice website**. To book a place or ask any questions, you're warmly invited to email us at: **nlhbereavement@northlondonhospice.co.uk**.

You are not alone in your grief, and these moments of remembrance are here to support you, whenever you're ready.

Books & Resources

The hospice has a number of books and leaflets available on grief and loss and helping children or teenagers.

Practical Help

After a bereavement, the prospect of sorting out paperwork and belongings can seem overwhelming. We can signpost you to people who may be able to help.



Compassionate Neighbours

Compassionate Neighbours is a community-led volunteer support programme providing social and emotional support. Since the programme began in North London in 2017, hundreds of local people have been trained as Compassionate Neighbours, offering their support and compassion across Barnet, Enfield and Haringey.

Compassionate Neighbours are trained volunteers who offer friendship and a listening ear to people referred to the programme who may be feeling lonely and socially isolated.

The support they can offer is multifaceted and can be tailored to your needs. Visit our website to find out more or scan the QR code



We also have several wellbeing groups and social activities which take place both in person and online.

If these services are of interest, the Bereavement Team can complete a referral form for you to access the scheme.



Children and Young People

"I don't know how to help my children"

What about children?

People often think we should protect children from grief and are worried about saying or doing the wrong thing. We wonder how best to support them when someone close to them dies.

Just as adults, children react to loss in different ways and at different times. They may have questions, fears and powerful feelings, which can cause them to feel confused and alone if they are left out of what is happening around them. By giving children information honestly and openly in small chunks, allowing them to express their feelings, to make informed choices and feel part of what is going on, children can feel reassured, supported and understood.

Whilst we can't provide services to children directly, we can provide guidance to adults who are supporting bereaved children and have resources that families can borrow. In addition, we can signpost families to child bereavement organisations.



Some other resources available locally and nationally:

For children and young people

Grief Encounter

Children's bereavement service

www.griefencounter.org.uk

Address: The Lodge, 17 East End Road,
London N3 3QU

email: **support@griefencounter.org.uk**

Hope Again

Hope again is the youth website of Cruse Bereavement Care. Designed by bereaved young people as a safe interactive place where young people aged 11-18 can share their stories about loss and begin to find ways of hoping again. They can also find a listening ear, information, and advice. **www.hopeagain.org.uk**

Riprap

The site is developed for teenagers who have a parent with cancer, including those whose parent has died. Go to website: **www.riprap.org.uk**

Winston's Wish

Help for grieving children and young adults & their families

www.winstonswish.org.uk

Email: **ask@winstonswish.org**

Service for young people: **www.help2makesense.org/**

For adults:

Barnet Bereavement Service

Bereavement counselling for Barnet residents

Public Tel: **020 8441 3572**

Email: **barnetbereavement@tiscali.co.uk**

(N.B. this organisation provides free services, and often has a waiting list)

Enfield Counselling Centre

Counselling for individuals and couples in Enfield

www.enfieldcounselling.co.uk

Address: St Paul's Centre, 102a Church Street, Enfield,
Middlesex EN2 6AR

Haringey Bereavement Service

St Joseph's Hospice in Hackney provides bereavement support and counselling for: adults (18+) who live in City and Hackney or are registered with a City and Hackney G.P. who have experienced a bereavement

www.stjh.org.uk Email: **stjosephs.firstcontact@nhs.net**

Address: St Joseph's Hospice, Mare Street, E8 4SA

Cruse Bereavement Care

National Bereavement charity offering support, advice, and information when someone dies. **www.cruse.org.uk**

Cruse offers face-to-face, telephone, email and website support, including **www.hopeagain.org.uk** specifically for children and young people.

The Good Grief Trust

A national charity with a website in different languages detailing free local support across the UK.

www.thegoodgrieftrust.org Email **hello@thegoodgrieftrust.org**

Online forums for bereaved people:

1. **Bereavement UK** online community **www.bereavementuk.co.uk**

2. **Macmillan** online community **www.community.macmillan.org.uk**

3. **Sue Ryder** online Bereavement Community

www.community.sueryder.org

Bereavement counselling service for online community members – free to use and held over secure video chat **www.sueryder.org/online-bereavement-counselling**

Celebrate the life of your loved one by giving a gift to North London Hospice in their memory

North London Hospice cares for over 3,500 people every year across the boroughs of Barnet, Enfield, and Haringey, and offers some services in Camden and Islington. Our vision is to provide the best of life, at the end of life, for everyone.

The support we provide is completely free of charge, but it now costs over £16 million a year to run our charity. Whilst around a third of the amount comes from the NHS, we rely on the generosity of our community through donations to make up the shortfall in funding.

By supporting North London Hospice in memory of your loved one, you can make a real difference to others who will need our care in the future. Every gift in memory is a valued contribution.

Remembering someone who has died is a very personal thing, so we offer a range of different ways to give a gift in memory. These include:

- **Light Up A Life** – our annual remembrance event
- **Sow A Special Sunflower** – where names of your loved ones can be added to dedicated sunflower markers
- **Tribute Tree** – dedicate a leaf to a loved one with a one-off donation
- **A gift in your will** – whether large or small, gifts left to us are a vital source of income
- **Create a personal tribute page** – gives you a private and lasting space to remember your loved one.

To find out more, visit our website, scan the QR code or contact our Fundraising Team on **020 8446 2288** or complete the form overleaf.



Bereavement Support Service

-Initial Assessment

Please complete and return this document to Bereavement Services at North London Hospice.

First Name: _____

Middle Name: _____ **Surname:** _____

How would you like us to address you? Mr/ Mrs / Miss / Ms / Mx / Other

Please specify 'Other' _____

Date of Birth: _____

Your phone no: _____ **Email:** _____

Home address _____

Your GP practice: _____

GP contact tel no: _____

Emergency contact name: _____ (e.g. your next of kin) _____

Phone no: _____

Name of deceased: _____

Their date of death: _____

Where did your loved one die? _____

What was your relationship with the person that died? _____

How would you describe your ethnicity? _____

Would you like to share any faith or belief systems that are important to you? _____

Please specify the type of support that you would prefer:

Phone support / Face-to-face / video support / Walk and Talk Group /
Grief Café

Medical/Additional are there any relevant needs we should be aware of?

OUT OF 0-5 (5 being very much so), please state how you feel against the following statements:

I often feel overwhelmed by my grief	
I struggle to find ways to cope with my loss	
My grief makes it hard for me to cope with day-to-day situations	
I feel Isolated or alone in my grief	
I find it difficult to talk about my feelings	
I feel uncertain about how to move forward	

Is there anything else you would like us to know?

Have you received Listening Support before? ☐ Yes ☐ No

We need to share your contact information with the volunteer/s who will be providing support. Please confirm that you consent to this by ticking the box. ☐ Yes ☐ No

Would you be happy for us to share your contact information for events within the hospice? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Thank you for completing this assessment form. If we have any questions, we will give you a call. Otherwise, we will add you to our waiting list and one of our volunteers will contact you to arrange support.

Please contact us if you would like to talk through any of the above.

Signed: _____ **Date:** / /

Print name:

Role: (if completed by professional)

**Please send this form to: Bereavement Services,
North London Hospice, 47 Woodside Avenue London N12 8TT**