

An elephant is sitting on a wooden bench, viewed from behind. The elephant is positioned on a concrete ledge overlooking a vast, calm blue ocean under a clear sky. The elephant's trunk hangs down, and its tail is visible on the left. The overall scene is peaceful and contemplative.

Br eaking

THE TABOO OF

Be reavement  
and Death

**Don't ignore  
the elephant -  
It's OK to talk about  
bereavement**

## What does Bereavement mean?

A loss through death

### How can it make you feel?

Bereavement can affect how people feel in different ways. People in your life can give you “grief” but grief is also the process of adjusting to an experience of loss.



Loss can happen in many ways i.e. through relationship break up's, divorce, separation. It can also happen when you lose your keys, your phone, your bag, jacket etc. You can feel loss, grief and bereavement with all of these examples as it can feel as if something or someone has died.

This leaflet is about the grief and loss that we feel when someone dies.

Grief can be a full body experience

There are **PHYSICAL** reactions to the shock of hearing that someone has died.

These are to do with your body, your heart beats faster, your eyes go wide and your muscles can tense up.

Some people want to run away while other people just feel numb.

There are **THINKING** reactions to hearing someone has died.

These can be disbelief and denial.

This can be because it is really scary and difficult to accept that someone has died.

Grieving is a healthy experience, if we don't allow ourselves to grieve then we might become unhealthy in some way.

*For example, feeling emotions connected with bereavement can affect your sleeping pattern, you're eating pattern, your concentration at school, work or at college/ university. Anger is also a normal reaction when you are grieving, we can often act without thinking, taking our grief out on other people.*

Some people take risks to manage the distress of certain emotions, thoughts and feelings, risks, such as drinking more, having unprotected sex, getting into fights, taking drugs and self harming to distract themselves from the pain they feel. It's understandable to want to avoid the distress or discomfort brought about by certain emotions, but the healthiest way of managing them is to talk about them.

If you notice that you are taking part in risks to a level that is worrying you or others it is important to speak to a trusted adult about this.

## How to cope?

Try to find a trusted person that you can speak to about the death and loss you feel. They can help you with your workload or support you to take time off.

Sharing with people how you feel can help them to understand why you are acting or feeling the way you are. Talking about what has happened, how it has changed things, what your thoughts are and how your feelings have been affected, this is a normal, healthy way of attending to your grief.

*Keep a check on your emotions and what you can do to help – counting to ten, getting space, listening to music, doing exercise.*



Some young people have found the following helpful when they are going through a Bereavement; To be accepted, space to think, hugs, love, information, to be told the truth, laughter, peace and quiet, practical help i.e. getting a lift to places.

Having the opportunity to share the experience with other young people, having someone who will listen, without trying to fix you.

(info. taken from 'Dead Right N.O.W report - Barnardo's Rollercoaster, Dundee)

*Everyone has individual needs, think about yours and ask for them!!*

*Mournography – This can happen through social media such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs, forums and news articles when someone dies where cause of death is discussed, guessed and people comment about the person who died and their life. If you see anything online that upsets you about the death of someone you knew you can hide posts, comments, block people and report abuse.*

**A death should never been “rated” as more or less important than another death as it is affecting someone.**

## Where to get support?

The Corner [www.thecorner.co.uk](http://www.thecorner.co.uk)

Rollercoaster: [rollercoaster@barnardos.org.uk](mailto:rollercoaster@barnardos.org.uk)

Young carers: <http://www.youngcarers.co.uk/>  
[www.chooselife.net](http://www.chooselife.net)

Guidance teacher

Supervisor

Manager

Family/Friends



## Remember

That you are not alone. And there is no time limit on grief.  
As you get older your emotions may change as your  
understanding of bereavement changes.  
It is okay to talk about bereavement and death at any time.



With thanks to Steve Sweeney, Child Bereavement UK.  
Daryl Cuthbert, Barnardos Rollercoaster Dundee.  
and the young people from The Corner Express group.

The Corner is funded in partnership with NHS Tayside and Dundee City Council.