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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Caerdydd a'r Fro
Cardiff and Vale
University Health Board



Finding Bereavement Support

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What is Normal?

'Our grief is as individual as our lives'.

Dr Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

Psychiatrist and renowned writer and researcher on grief.

There is no such thing as normal. We know that bereavement is a uniquely personal experience, and there is no right or wrong way to grieve. Grief has no timeframe, no orderly process, no hierarchy of stages.

'Grief is not a disorder, a disease or sign of weakness. It is an emotional, physical and spiritual necessity, the price we pay for love. The only solution for grief is grieving'.

Earl Grollman
Grief Therapist

What We All Experience

People often talk of grief involving stages, but in truth there are no set stages or phases of grief which everyone experiences. But we can all recognise particular thoughts, feelings and physical responses which are quite common and entirely normal.

- shock and numbness – this is usually the first reaction to loss, and people often talk about “being in a daze”
- overwhelming sadness, with lots of crying
- tiredness or exhaustion
- anger – towards the person you’ve lost or the reason for your loss
- guilt – for example, guilt about feeling angry, about something you said or did not say, or not being able to stop your loved one dying

We know that there is often an expectation from ourselves and other people that in time we ‘move on’ from grief, or people even speak of ‘getting over grief’. This idea is closely related to the thought that there may be different stages of grief and that we eventually move through them to a place where we have ‘resolved’ our grief.

But in truth we all recognise that grief never actually goes away, but instead the experience of grief changes over time. You ‘get over’ the flu or a passing illness. But grief is not an ailment or condition to be ‘got over’. Many people find it helpful to speak of ‘growing around grief’. This idea recognises that grief remains but we can in time fashion a new life around our grief, and in doing so we learn to live with our grief.

Of course, our memories of the person who has died will remain. In time people sometimes speak of finding solace in these memories. Some people speak of feeling that whilst the death of someone close means that person's life has ended, it doesn't necessarily signal the complete end of the relationship. The person who has died is remembered and openly spoken about within the ongoing evolving story of a family. They may no longer be present in person, but who they were, what they did, and the relationship we had with them may continue to resonate within our lives. In this way people sometimes speak of retaining a sense of a 'continuing bond' with the person who has died.

'Your loved one's life was precious, and so is yours, and continuing to live it is not a disloyalty to them, but you can live a life that honours them.'

David Kessler
Grief Therapist

Grief and Caring for Someone with Dementia

We want to recognise and openly acknowledge that if you have been caring for someone with dementia, probably over many years, you will already have been experiencing loss and grief. But very often the thoughts and feelings experienced are not always widely recognised by others as expressions of loss and grief.

We know that dementia changes people in so many ways - cognitively, mentally and physically. What also changes of course, is the nature of a relationship. For someone with dementia their gradual loss of independence means that those who care have to do their best to try and meet seemingly everchanging needs. In the midst of this challenge families often speak of the person they are caring for changing in so many ways that it can seem as if they have made an unspoken goodbye without actually leaving.

Through this experience so many people recognise that grief and the sense of losing someone can begin well before the actual death of the person cared for.



‘Look After Yourself’ – What Does it Mean?

Following bereavement other people often make the well- intentioned comment ‘look after yourself’. But what does that mean, and how do you do that in the midst of grief.

There are a few basic steps which can help.

Be kind to yourself

Take each day at a time, don't place unrealistic demands upon yourself, give yourself permission to grieve. Appreciate that grief is exhausting. Your concentration, energy and ability to do things you previously took for granted may all be lowered. Understand that grief is normal and human, and that over time your experience of grief will change.

Listen to your feelings

Follow your feelings and do whatever you feel you need to do. Other people's advice may be good advice, but their experience of grief will not be your experience of grief. If you need to sleep, then sleep, if you need to go for a walk, then walk, if you need to cry, then cry, if you need to talk to someone, then find someone you feel comfortable with who will listen.

Being Busy and Also Taking Time to Grieve

We can all recognise that the period of busyness which typically happens after someone dies, with funeral arrangements, practical issues, people visiting etc whilst exhausting can also through the distraction provided prove helpful. But it's not uncommon to hear people say ‘I haven't had time to grieve’. In the midst of all the busyness it's important to take time out to grieve. Grief is exhausting and so we do need the relief of distraction, but we also need to find time to grieve as the only ultimate relief for grief is to grieve.

Diet and Sleep

Difficult as it might be, maintaining a good diet and getting rest is essential. Any sense of relief from alcohol or substances is temporary and ultimately harmful.

Keeping a Routine

Trying to keep connected to others, and having a consistent approach to eating and rest can help. Routine helps to structure our lives.

Talking to someone

Being able to openly talk about your thoughts or feelings with friends, family, or anyone you trust is generally helpful. Thoughts and feelings shared and reflected upon can sometimes seem more manageable.

Avoiding Self Blame / ‘What if’ and ‘If Only’ Questions

In trying to make sense of loss it's entirely normal to look back upon the events and circumstances in the period before someone died. In trying to piece together the story of what happened we can sometimes find ourselves asking ‘what if’ and ‘if only’ questions. Its all too easy to then find fault in ourselves or others. In truth we know that so much in life is beyond our ability to control, but recognising this makes us feel helpless, so therefore we often find feeling guilty preferable.

Finding Support Following Bereavement

For many people there is never a need to seek out professional support. People manage their bereavement and grief personally with the support of their family, friends, and wider community.

But sometimes, and it can be years later as grief has no timescale, it can be helpful to receive professional support with the thoughts and feelings which accompany a bereavement. Sometimes these thoughts and feelings can't be easily expressed to those closest to us, and people sometimes speak of becoming 'stuck' with their grief.

Even if you don't feel a need to access formal professional support, you may find it helpful to get involved in some of the bereavement support social activities which exist locally for shared learning, mutual support and friendship with others who understand the challenge of bereavement from personal experience. Or you may simply want to know more about bereavement related issues and access reliable, supportive advice and information.

But how do you access this support, where do you look?

The information provided here aims to give some guidance on how to access both national and local support. This is not an exhaustive list, but aims to help you begin to navigate towards the bereavement related support that is right for you.

How Can I Access Support?

See your GP to discuss your needs

An obvious starting point is to make an appointment to see your GP. If your bereavement related needs are impacting upon your mental and physical wellbeing your GP will be able to discuss with you how best to address these needs.

A conversation with your GP may enable you if necessary to be referred to a relevant local counselling or support service.

Alternatively, there are several national charities which specialise in bereavement support. You could access support through exploring their websites or giving them a call.

National Support

Cruse

Helpline: 0808 808 1677

www.cruse.org.uk

Cruse is the leading UK national charity providing bereavement support. You can access their services online at www.cruse.org.uk

You will see that they have a helpline (0808 808 1677). Cruse offers potential access to a trained volunteer able to provide up to six sessions of support by telephone, or online. They also have a chat room service where people can access support from a trained volunteer online. Their website provides access to a vast range of bereavement related information and resources. The charity also provides an extensive programme of educational and training opportunities.

Marie Curie

Helpline: 0800 090 2309

www.mariecurie.org.uk

Marie Curie is the leading UK national charity providing end of life care. Their support offer extends into bereavement support. Information on their bereavement support service is available through calling the helpline (0800 090 2309). Again, this can if appropriate enable access to six sessions with a trained support line officer. You can find more detail online at the address www.mariecurie.org.uk

The only criteria for accessing this service is that the deceased died from an 'illness'.

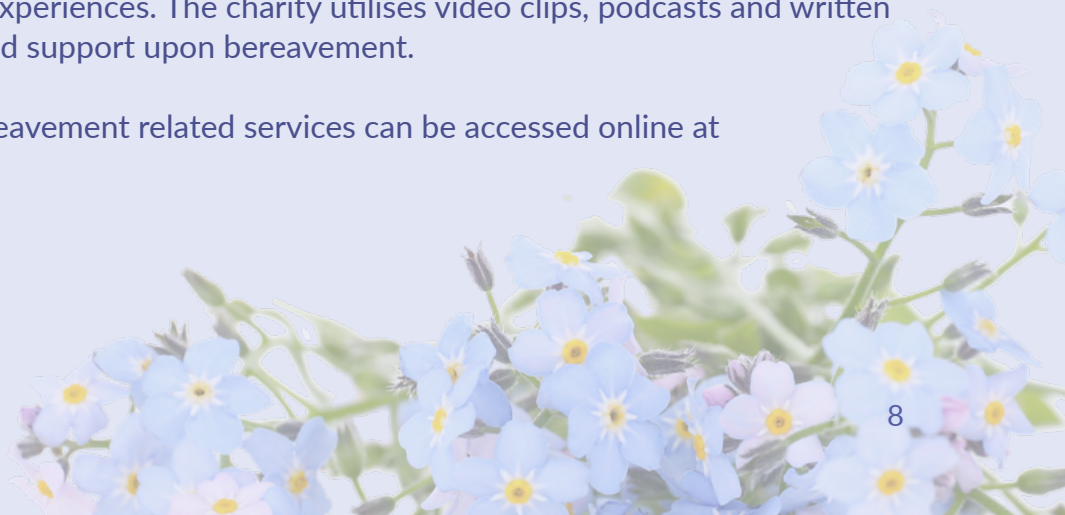
Sue Ryder

www.sueryder.org

Sue Ryder is a national charity which supports people who are living with a terminal illness, a neurological condition, and anyone dealing with a bereavement. The charity provides a wide variety of bereavement support services.

The charity offers access to video counselling sessions with an allocated counsellor. Instructions on how to register interest in accessing the online bereavement counselling service are available online. An online community forum also provides opportunity for gaining mutual support and sharing experiences. The charity utilises video clips, podcasts and written material all offering advice and support upon bereavement.

Information about all the bereavement related services can be accessed online at www.sueryder.org



Bereavement Support Online Search Engines

At a Loss

www.ataloss.org

020 705 20323

At a Loss is a national signposting website which aims to provide access to bereavement related information and support all in one trusted place. The service is available online at www.ataloss.org

The service does not provide direct bereavement support, but instead aims to empower people through helping them identify relevant services in their locality.

The service also runs an online programme entitled the Bereavement Journey which uses films and discussion to guide groups of people through the most common aspects of grief. Further information on this initiative is available from telephone number +44 (0) 20 7052 0323.

The Good Grief Trust

www.thegoodgrieftrust.org

The Good Grief Trust is an online service which provides information upon a wide range of national bereavement service helplines, information, advice, and guidance upon all aspects of bereavement. Personal stories are also shared which help to illustrate how specific support can help. The service has a search engine which enables users to identify the range of services within their locality.

Open to Hope

www.opentohope.com

Open to Hope is a non-profit organisation which provides a wide range of resources to support people internationally with bereavement and grief. To find out more you can visit their website at www.opentohope.com

Finding a Counsellor

There are many local counselling services and it can be difficult to know where to begin. The information below is not a comprehensive listing of local providers, but aims to identify some local routes to specific bereavement focused counselling services.

www.bacp.co.uk includes a 'Find a Counsellor' section
0145 588 3300 - Mon - Fri: 8.45am to 5pm

The British Association of Counselling & Psychotherapy is the Professional association and accrediting body for counsellors. Their website will enable you to identify accredited counsellors where you live.

Local Support

City Hospice, Counselling Service

Whitchurch Hospital Grounds, Park Road, Whitchurch, Cardiff, CF14 7BF
029 205 24158

Offers bereavement counselling to anyone living in the Cardiff area. You or your family don't need to have had any previous contact with the hospice to access this support. The service enables access to trained Counsellors. A wide range of therapy approaches are utilised including talking therapy, music and art therapy. Support through social activity is also a feature, with the service facilitating group engagements including a walking group.

To access the service call **029 205 24158** (select option 3 for the counselling service). Or an online look at the service is available at www.cityhospice.org.uk

Platfform Wellbeing (Counselling Service)

1 Pen Y Lan Road, Roath, Cardiff, CF24 3PG
029 204 40191

Part of the Platform charity for mental health and social change. Platfform Wellbeing offers a free bereavement counselling service which can involve up to eight individual sessions. The option exists, if need be, to follow this up with eight further sessions across eight months in a group format.

If you'd like to find out more they are contactable on telephone 029 204 40191.

Marie Curie Hospice

Penarth (Bridgeman Rd, Penarth, CF64 3YR)
penarth.hospice@mariecurie.org.uk
029 204 26000

The Hospice service offers opportunities for in-person group counselling sessions at the hospice for anyone bereaved after having cared for someone with a terminal illness (this includes dementia).

Local Opportunities for Bereavement Support

- Social Activities for Shared Learning, Mutual Support and Friendship

ACE – Action in Caerau and Ely

Venue – Dusty Forge, 460 Cowbridge Road West, Cardiff UHB, CF5 5BZ

029 200 03132

info@aceplace.org

ACE is a community developed charity owned and run by the residents of Ely and Caerau in West Cardiff.

The Services at Ace are available to anyone living in the West Cardiff Communities of Caerau and Ely.

The ACE services are available for anyone from an ethnic minority background, regardless of where they live in Cardiff.

The Ace - Compassionate Communities project sees the service provide two distinct Bereavement Support opportunities

Grief Space

In the beautiful setting of the Dusty Forge Garden, the team at ACE have built a wonderful wood cabin with open access to the garden which features a pond, vegetable patches, and a little local wildlife. Community members come together in this safe and compassionate space to share thoughts, feelings, experiences, to learn and grow through grief together. It is a space where people can voice grief, loss and bereavement and listen to others non-judgmentally and with compassion. Tea and coffee is provided, and such is the popularity of the setting that attendance continues even during the colder winter months, with bring a blanket being advised.

Creative Grief Space

In addition to 'Grief Space' the ACE team have developed an Arts project called 'Creative Grief Space'. This project uses art as a means of supporting people to express grief and loss. The Dusty Forge venue where ACE are based has an arts studio which supports ceramic and textiles work alongside expression through painting and drawing.

If you'd like to find out more about the services outlined here, and how you might get involved, just give ACE a call on Tel – **029 200 03132**. Or email **info@aceplace.org**



Community Grief Hub



The Community Grief Hub has launched at the STAR Hub – supporting local members of the community to access grief and bereavement support and resources following the death of someone close.

Cruse is working with the Co-op to bring grief resources, drop-in support sessions and Compassionate Communities workshops to your hub. We're offering free community support to those who are grieving, and new skills to those who want to understand how to better support someone following a bereavement.

We're running a weekly drop in on **every Wednesday from 10:00-13:00**, where **Nigel** from Cruse will be able to share a cup of tea and signpost you to new support within your community.



Find out more:

Find out more online at coop.co.uk/griefandbereavement

Contact us connecting.communities@cruse.org.uk

Join us at **STAR Hub Muirton Rd, Tremorfa, Cardiff CF24 2SJ**

Find things to do in your local community at co-operate.coop.co.uk

working in partnership with:

Cruse
Bereavement
Support

 **Cruse
Scotland**
Bereavement Support

**co
op**
It's what we do

Cruse Bereavement Support – registered charity no. 208078. A company limited by guarantee 00638709. Registered office: Unit 0.1, One Victoria Villas, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 2GW
Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland – (Cruse Scotland) is a registered Scottish Charity (SC031600) and a Scottish Company limited by guarantee (SC218026).

Community Grief Hub



The Community Grief Hub has launched at the Capel-I-Bawb – supporting local members of the community to access grief and bereavement support and resources following the death of someone close.

Cruse is working with the Co-op to bring grief resources, drop-in support sessions and Compassionate Communities workshops to your hub. We're offering free community support to those who are grieving, and new skills to those who want to understand how to better support someone following a bereavement.

We're running a weekly drop in on **every Monday from 12:00-14:00**, where **Nigel** from Cruse will be able to share a cup of tea and signpost you to new support within your community.



Find out more:

Find out more online at coop.co.uk/griefandbereavement

Contact us connecting.communities@cruse.org.uk

Join us at **Capel-I-Bawb, Cardiff Royal Infirmary, Glossop Terrace, Cardiff, CF24 0SZ**

Find things to do in your local community at co-operate.coop.co.uk

working in partnership with:

Cruse
Bereavement
Support



Cruse
Scotland
Bereavement Support



It's what we do

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Connecting Communities Cruse Bereavement Support

What is the connecting community's project?

Working in partnership with the Co-op, Cruse Bereavement Support is providing specialist resources, training and information to people in your community.



We will all be bereaved at some point in our lives, and 60% of us will turn to our friends, families, colleagues and communities for support. The aim of this project is to equip as many people as possible with tools to support having conversations about grief and bereavement. Helping more members of the community get access to the right support for them, at the right time.

How are we working with community members in Splott?

Nigel Dore, our Community Development Officer is working with community groups and local organisations across Splott. He is building relationships with people from across the community to identify ways in which we can better support the community to have conversations about grief and bereavement.

He will be working with local Co-op representatives and community leaders to deliver training to groups across Splott, breaking down the barriers surrounding grief and helping open the conversation about bereavement support.

How can you get involved?

We want to hear from you! If you would like to attend the free training sessions, or support us in engaging with your community then get in touch! Maybe you think this training could help your workplace in supporting grief? Or maybe the community group you attend could support having these conversations?

Get in touch with Nigel to hear more and get involved!

Nigel Doré, Community Development Officer, Cruse Bereavement Support

Mobile: 079 399 36112

Nigel.Dore@cruse.org.uk





FORGET
ME NOT
CHORUS
(ALON)



Calon Chorus is open to anyone who has loved and lost someone with dementia.

Our friendly weekly sessions are free and take place at Canton Uniting Church on Thursdays 6:30–8:30pm. No singing experience is required.

“Calon has hugely helped me in a way that nothing else has. It gives me a huge sense of wellbeing to be able to support other people and to benefit from their support”

Come and join us!



Join our new community and share experiences and support...

**Canton Uniting Church,
Cowbridge Rd East, Cardiff, CF5 1LQ
Thursdays 6:30–8:30pm**

Contact FMNC –
calon@forgetmenotchorus.com
029 2236 2064

In partnership with



'We Walk Together' Bereavement Support Walking Group

Join Nigel from Cruse Bereavement Support for a monthly bereavement support walking group starting on Wednesday 5th April 2023.

The group will meet monthly to enjoy a gentle stroll around Roath Park, giving bereaved members of the community a chance to connect and share their losses whilst enjoying some fresh air, and refreshments at the Terra Nova park café.

The death of a loved one brings a wide range of emotional, social and physical challenges. Everyone's experience of grief is unique to them. Sometimes connecting with the company of others, enjoying fresh air, activity, and the great outdoors can really help.

Where : Roath Park Lake, Cardiff CF23 5PA

Meeting point : Scott Memorial Light House / Clock Tower

When : 1st Wednesday of every month from 2pm to 4pm



To find out more or ask any questions
email -

connecting.communities@cruse.org.uk

or call Nigel on 07939 936112

working in partnership with:

Cruse
Bereavement
Support

 **Cruse
Scotland**
Bereavement Support


It's what we do

The FAN Charity: bringing people together to meet, listen and talk

Come to a FAN (Friends and Neighbours) Group! You'll meet friends and neighbours and feel more hopeful for the world.

All FAN Groups are free and open to all but we are a charity and rely on funding to continue our work. If you feel you are able to give please go to **www.thefancharity.org**. Your support will mean that we can host FAN Groups for free, for everyone.



www.thefancharity.org

Tel: **078 806 30553**

Facebook: **thefancharity**

Twitter: **@thefancharity**

Come to a FAN (Friends and Neighbours) Group! It's a great opportunity for local people to meet newcomers; you'll meet friends and neighbours and feel more hopeful for the world.

You are welcome to attend any of the meetings wherever they are based geographically and we also extend a warm welcome to people who are learning English and would like to practise their skills in a supportive and friendly environment.

The FAN Charity is not a specific bereavement support initiative.

FAN provides an opportunity to meet with others for friendship and mutual support. To learn more and find groups local to you visit their website at **www.thefancharity.org**

Support available within the Health Board

Within the Health Board we have a Bereavement Nurse and Support Service that can be contacted as follows:

Telephone: **029 218 44949**

Text: **078 124 95281**

Email: Faye.Protheroe@wales.nhs.uk

The team are able to offer support and advice and assist in directing you to the most appropriate support.

If religious, spiritual, or pastoral support is required please contact our Chaplaincy Team:

Telephone: **029 218 43230**

Email: Spiritual.Careteam@wales.nhs.uk

Sadly, sometimes there may be concerns regarding the care given to a family member, we have a Concerns Team who would be able to advise you of the steps to take regarding this:

Telephone: **029 218 36340**

Email: Concerns@wales.nhs.uk

See a GP if:

- you're struggling to cope with stress, anxiety or a low mood
- you've had a low mood for more than 2 weeks
- things you're trying yourself are not helping
- you would prefer to get a referral from a GP

Urgent advice: Call 111 or ask for an urgent GP appointment if:

- you need help urgently, but it's not an emergency

111 can tell you the right place to get help if you need to see someone.

Go to 111.nhs.uk or call: **111**.

Immediate action required: Call 999 or go to A&E now if:

- you or someone you know needs immediate help
- you have seriously harmed yourself – for example, by taking a drug overdose

A mental health emergency should be taken as seriously as a medical emergency.



Samaritans

English and Welsh helpline

If you are struggling to cope and need someone to talk to, Samaritans will listen. You can contact Samaritans 24 hours a day, 365 days a year on **116 123** (free from any phone) or email jo@samaritans.org. You can also call the Samaritans Welsh Language Line (free from any phone) on **0808 164 0123** (7pm–11pm every day).

Welsh only helpline

Did you know Samaritans have a Welsh Language Line? They know how important it is to access support in your first language & Samaritans volunteers are there to support you. You can call them for free between 7pm & 11pm 7 days a week on **0808 164 0123**.

Please don't struggle alone.

Free-to-call

Did you know that you can call Samaritans for free, in English or Welsh, and it won't show up on your phone bill? You can contact Samaritans 24 hours a day, 365 days a year on **116 123** (free from any phone) or email jo@samaritans.org. You can also call the Samaritans Welsh Language Line (free from any phone) on **0808 164 0123** (7pm–11pm every day).

Reasons to call

People contact Samaritans with all sorts of concerns and what might be a small issue to you may be huge to someone else. You could be going through something new, you may be struggling to cope or you may be feeling suicidal. Samaritans are always there to listen if you need to talk.

Further information - How can I contact Samaritans?

On the phone

This number is free to call from both landlines and mobiles, including pay-as-you-go mobiles. You do not need to have any credit or call allowance on your plan to call. You can contact Samaritans 24 hours a day, 365 days a year on **116 123** (free from any phone) or email jo@samaritans.org. You can also call the Samaritans Welsh Language Line (free from any phone) on **0808 164 0123** (7pm–11pm every day).

Via email

You can email Samaritans at jo@samaritans.org. They aim to respond within 24 hours.

By letter

Sometimes writing down your thoughts and feelings can help you better understand them. You can write to Samaritans for free, in English or Welsh at Freepost SAMARITANS LETTERS.

What can I talk to Samaritans about?

People contact Samaritans with all sorts of concerns and what might be a small issue to you may be huge to someone else.

You could be going through something new or have been struggling to cope for some time, either way, Samaritans are there if you feel you need some extra support.

If what's getting to you isn't on this list, please still get in touch. Common reasons people contact Samaritans about are:

- relationship and family problems
- loss, including loss of a friend or a family member through bereavement
- financial worries
- job-related stress
- college or study-related stress
- loneliness and isolation
- depression
- painful and/or disabling physical illness
- heavy use of or dependency on alcohol or other drugs
- thoughts of suicide
- sexuality or gender

Samaritans won't make decisions for you and will support the decisions you make.

Are Samaritans religious?

Samaritans are not religious. The link between their name and any religious text is completely coincidental.

Their listeners will never impose any personal attitudes or beliefs on you.

What if I'm d/Deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech impediment?

Callers who are d/Deaf or who have hearing or speech impairments can contact Samaritans for support by email by using jo@samaritans.org or by using the Next Generation Text (NGT) service.

Next Generation Text is not specific to Samaritans and can be used on any telephone number. You can contact Samaritans in this way using your local branch telephone number which can be found at www.samaritans.org/wales/branches

What if I'm under 18?

You can still get in touch with Samaritans if you're under 18. Samaritans are there for you, whatever your age. Their first responsibility is to you, not your parents or guardian.

You can talk to Samaritans about whatever is on your mind and they will listen. This might include how you look, problems at school or college, how people are treating you, and worries about exams or money.

What if I have mental health issues?

Samaritans provide the same support to people with mental health issues as they do for anyone else.

If you have a mental health diagnosis, you can talk about it with Samaritans, or you may want to talk to them about something else that's troubling you, and that's fine too.

Samaritans know that people with the same diagnosis may have very different experiences. They will explore what living with your mental health issue means for you. Your experience is the most important thing to Samaritans, not the label.

Because Samaritans volunteers aren't trained mental health professionals, when you talk about your diagnosis or medication, they may not always be familiar with the medical terms.

Shouldn't I talk to friends and family instead?

Some people do not have the support of friends or family. Others do have friends or family to talk to but find that talking to someone neutral can also be beneficial.

Samaritans keep conversations private, so they can't pass the information you give us onto anyone else and they won't judge or insist on giving advice.



“That’s the other thing you learn in grief, and maybe this is why I’m not scared of it, is the relationship continues. It grows and deepens in their absence. And if the relationship was a happy one, the umbrella of love and kindness, it carries on.... It is undeniable in your memory.”

Rory Kinnear
Actor





