

# BEREAVEMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

## SELF CARE GUIDE

Working in a healthcare environment, you may personally experience the loss of someone's life, a patient, colleague, friend or family member.

Bereavement is a devastating experience for anyone to go through and may trigger a range of emotions for you including, guilt, anger, sadness and loss. You may feel a loss of confidence or a feeling of failure. It is important to find ways to look after your well-being at this difficult time.

### How to look after yourself

-  **Accept what you are feeling and express them.** It's normal and understandable to feel the way you do. Recognise that any intense pain you are experiencing is a reflection of how much you care.
-  **Talk about how you are feeling** to a colleague, manager, friend, family or health professional.
-  **Accept that you will feel overwhelmed at times.** Painful feelings may arise like a wave. Allow the wave to happen and know you will not drown. Over time the waves will reduce in size. In time grief may not go, but you can find a way to live with it.
-  **Acknowledge what you have lost, but also what you still have.** Find a balance between allowing yourself to grieve and engage with life, continuing to do things you enjoy and connect with the people around you.
-  **Acknowledge what's happening to you here and now.** Find a way to ground yourself in the present moment. You can do this by becoming conscious of your own breathing and notice what you can see and hear around you.
-  **Be kind to yourself.** Give yourself the permission to take time for you. Do the things that give you a sense of fulfilment.
-  **Look after your physical health.** Stress from grief makes it more difficult to sleep, eat a balanced diet and stay healthy. Try to get into a good sleep routine and eating habits. Take regular exercise.
-  **Rest when you can.** Grief takes up energy, rest when you are able to.
-  **Seek support** – you are not alone!

### Further support

- Your manager
- Occupational Health [ndht.occupationalhealth@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.occupationalhealth@nhs.net)
- Chaplaincy support 01271 322362
- Employee Assistance Provision (EAP) - 03303 800658
- National NHS Helpline
- Speak to your GP
- National Bereavement Support line - operated by Hospice UK and free to access from 8am – 8pm, 7 days a week. A team of fully qualified and trained bereavement specialists are available to support you with bereavement and wellbeing issues relating to loss experienced through your work. You will be offered up to 3 sessions with the same counsellor and onward support to our staff mental health services if you need. Call: 0300 303 4434