

When do you need counselling?

Most people experiencing normal grief and bereavement have a period of sorrow, numbness, and even guilt and anger. Gradually these feelings ease, and it's possible to accept loss and move forward. For some people, feelings of loss are so strong they don't improve even after time passes.

The grieving process

Different people follow different paths through the grieving experience. The order and timing of these phases may vary from person to person:

- *Accepting the reality of your loss*
- *Allowing yourself to experience the pain of your loss*
- *Adjusting to a new reality in which the deceased is no longer present*
- *Having other relationships*

During the first few months after a loss, most of the normal grief symptoms gradually start to fade. If you've lost a loved one after a considerable amount of time you are still feeling such profound disbelief, hopelessness or intense yearning for your loved one that you can't function in daily life, or if intense grief doesn't improve over time, you may need to seek professional help.

Signs and Symptoms

You may benefit from professional help if, over time, you continue to:

- *Have trouble carrying out normal routines*
- *Withdraw from social activities*
- *Experience depression or deep sadness*
- *Have thoughts of guilt or self-blame*
- *Believe that you did something wrong or could have prevented the death*
- *Have lost your sense of purpose in life*
- *Feel life isn't worth living without your loved one*
- *Wish you had died along with your loved one*

When to seek professional help for grief

If you recognise any of the above signs and symptoms talk to a professional right away, this could be a doctor or a counselling service.

How Lewisham Bereavement Counselling can help you

We provide a confidential, one-to-one counselling, support and advice service to bereaved people over the age of 18 living in the Lewisham Borough. One-to-one counselling, offers you an opportunity to express and share your feelings, thoughts and worries - no matter how complex these may be - with someone who is able to listen, empathise and accept you without judgement.

The counselling assessment

Before we agree to counselling sessions, we ask you to attend an assessment. As part of the assessment process, we will be asking you a series of questions which will help us to make sure that the service we provide is suitable for your needs.

The counselling commitment

Once we agree that counselling sessions are right for you, it is important for you to give a firm commitment to the process. When you commit to a course of counselling, we ask you to attend sessions at the agreed time every week, for up to 12 weeks. This helps you to make the best use of your counselling and helps us to manage the service.

Counselling sessions

Counselling sessions last for 50 minutes. This is your time to use in whatever way you feel will best meet your needs. Your counsellor is there to listen to you and share and talk about whatever aspects of your loss is causing you to feel distressed, worried or concerned.

For more information or if you think you need bereavement counselling contact the office at:

lewishambereavement@btinternet.com

020 8692 6252