

When a Loved One Dies

We all experience grief in different ways.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve.

You may not cry for some time. You may feel relief that the suffering is over.

Don't be afraid to ask others for help. You will find people saying – 'if there's anything I can do....?' – say yes.

Here are some tips to help cope with the practicalities

Who can register the death?

- a blood relative
- the person organising the funeral
- someone who witnessed the person's death
- someone for the hospital, if the person died there (however, this takes time)

Documents

The registry office will tell you what documents to take, or to supply to the person who is going to register the death.

If the person's death was anticipated, it is very helpful to have relevant documents together – such as birth certificate, marriage certificate, domestic documents that may need altering e.g. home insurance documents.

Appointments

Plan appointments – such as seeing the solicitor, who will come to the house – to allow enough spacing between for you to 'recover'.

The Funeral

Even from your bed you can be involved in the preparations for your loved one's funeral.

The funeral director will visit you at home.

Being too ill to attend the funeral brings special considerations.

You may wish to consider:

- Having the coffin at home so that you can be with your loved one. If you do decide to do this, allow yourself plenty of time.
- Having a memorial service at home with a few close friends / family; you may wish to ask the person who will be taking the funeral service to take this.
- Having attendance cards, so you know who attended the funeral.
- You could write the eulogy, and have it read out on your behalf at the service.

If the funeral is a burial, you may be able to arrange that the grave is at a place in the cemetery that makes it easiest to visit. For example, next to the path.

Emotional Support

If you are struggling emotionally, Cruse Bereavement Care provide a dedicated bereavement counselling service and can offer support, visiting you at home. Tel: 0844 47 9400

www.cruse.org.uk

helpline@cruse.org.uk

These details are for England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

If you are in Scotland, you can contact Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland

Tel: 0845 600 2227 Weekdays 9am-4pm Evenings Mon-Thurs 6pm-9pm

www.crusescotland.org

info@crusescotland.org.uk

If your loved one died in a hospital or hospice, there is usually a bereavement counsellor based there.

You may be feeling very vulnerable, low, and in a bleak place, but given time happy memories will come. You will smile again.

Helen Baxter

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Our heartfelt thanks to Helen for sharing this advice, from her own experience. It's typical of Helen to be motivated to help others by sharing what she has learned with other members of the 25% ME Group. *Helen Brownlie, advocacy worker*