

Remembrance - Gone but not forgotten

Service of Remembrance

A Service of Remembrance is an opportunity to take time to reflect and remember the person who has died. The ceremony, led by the Chaplaincy team, includes music and reflection, a candle lighting ceremony and a short talk from a social worker on the early stages of grief. Invitations are sent to family and friends of patients who have died about 2-4 months after the person has died.

Bereavement Information Evening

“A Journey through Bereavement” is a talk given by one of the Social Workers. It will describe some of the different ways people experience bereavement. At the end of the talk there is an opportunity to talk to the bereavement volunteers and social workers over a cup of tea if you would like to talk to them or ask any questions.

Invitations are sent to bereaved families whose relative has died in the previous 4 to 6 months.

Invitation

If you would like to receive an invitation to either service at any time, please contact the Social Work Secretary at (01) 8327535 or SWSecretary@sfh.ie with your contact details and the name of the person who died.

Tree of Life

At Christmastime, in our Tree of Life ceremonies, we remember all those we have cared for as we gather around the large Christmas trees in the grounds of St. Francis Hospice Raheny and St. Francis Hospice Blanchardstown. It is a time for us to think of those who are no longer with us and those close to us who are experiencing sadness or difficulty. The ceremonies, led by the Chaplaincy team, usually take place on the first and second Thursdays of December.



Remembrance Book

You may wish to enter a tribute to someone who has died in our Remembrance Book. There are books available in the main reception of both Raheny and Blanchardstown, as well as the online at www.sfh.ie. All tributes entered in the Remembrance Book are on open view to all. We hope that the writers and readers of these tributes will gain some comfort and know that they are not alone in their loss.



WHAT CAN HELP?

- It is normal to grieve when somebody dies. Remember grief is not a disease!
- Grief affects how you think, how you feel, how you are physically and how you make sense of your world.
- Grief is a time of change and adjustment.
- Many people experience waves of grief with little control over them. Over time these occur less frequently.
- Try to look after yourself, try to eat well. Go to your GP if you are worried about any physical symptoms that persist.
- Identify people you can talk to, people who can listen and people who can distract you at times.
- Remember people grieve differently within the family.
- Take time to remember the person—light a candle, look at photos, listen to music.
- You also need times where you focus on distraction, doing things you enjoy, having fun—like “stepping stones” in your grief.
- Try not to make more major changes in your life than you have to.
- Whatever you do or wherever you go you bring your grief with you.
- Remember you will be changed by your experience of bereavement.

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TÚSLA

An Ghníomhaireacht um Leanaí agus an Teaghlach
Child and Family Agency

**St. Francis Hospice Dublin
Raheny and Blanchardstown**

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When a death occurs

“Is it normal to
feel like this when
somebody dies?!”



Bereavement Support Services
St. Francis Hospice Dublin
(Under the Care of the Daughters of Charity)

WHAT IS NORMAL GRIEF?

Grief is a natural reaction to any loss, not just death. Often described as a journey, grief does not follow set stages. It can include many mixed and different thoughts and feelings. Most people “go in and out” of their grief as they adjust to life again. The normal process of adjustment may include learning new skills, or taking on new tasks such as managing finances or cooking.

How will grief affect me?

Grief involves a range of emotional, physical and spiritual responses, which you may not be used to dealing with. Like a wave, one moment you feel fine and can cope, and the next moment grief washes over you, overwhelming you. When someone close dies you may struggle to make sense of the experience.

It is often difficult to put into words how painful the feelings of grief are and you may wonder if it will ever get any better. In time, you will learn to live with the loss and enjoy life again, but how long this takes is different for everyone. Grief is a very complex process and affects everyone differently.

Everyone had a different relationship with the person who died. You might have been very close to the person, or maybe there were challenges or difficulties in your relationship with the person who died. This will affect how you grieve and you might be surprised at the intensity of your feelings now. Each grief reaction is unique and it is impossible to know how you are going to be during the bereavement. Nobody can tell you how you are going to feel.

You may experience sleep disturbance, changes in your appetite, poor memory and concentration, increased levels of anxiety, stomach upsets and headaches. If physical symptoms persist over a prolonged period then it can be helpful to talk to your family doctor and get these checked out.

THE FAMILY?

When somebody in the family dies it affects the whole family. However, each person is grieving a different relationship with the person who died. One person may be grieving the loss of a spouse, while for others it is a parent or a brother or a sister or a child.

The family as a whole has to adapt to life without the person physically present. The different roles people have in the family must change to take account of this. This adjustment is happening at the same time as family members are grieving and it can be a very emotional and tense time for everybody. This is normal and happens to all grieving families.

Families differ in how much they talk about sad and painful issues. Some families find it very difficult to share their emotional journey with one another as they travel through grief. It will be helpful if you can talk to other family members about your experience of grief, although it is important to remember that everyone in your family may be grieving differently.



CHILDREN

Children grieve too when somebody dies. Children need honest explanations of how the person died and what will happen now. The amount of information they need will vary depending on their age and ability to understand what is happening. Children often need to ask repeated questions and get information gradually from an adult they trust.

Very young children may not fully understand the concept of death but they certainly react when somebody dies. This reaction will often be shown in their behavior. Grieving children may go back to behaving in a way typical of when they were younger. Other children may try to take on more responsibility in the family than they should and this is something to be careful about.

Children benefit from a chance to show their feelings and to have them acknowledged. They often need help to understand their feelings. Children also need to be play and have fun – taking a break from the hard feelings of grief. However, it is important to remember that children have the right to comfort other family members who are grieving and this may help them contribute to the changes going on within the family.

Bereavement Counselling

The Social Work service is available to help families cope with their bereavement through the provision of information, support and bereavement counselling, to both adults and children. Social Workers can meet people individually and together. They may provide information about how to talk to your child and others who may have difficulty with understanding death and loss of a close relative.

Volunteer Bereavement Support Service (VBSS)

The service consists of a team of trained and experienced volunteers who work under the supervision of the Social Work Department of St Francis Hospice. It is a confidential listening service and the volunteers meet clients on a one-to-one basis at the Hospice. It is an opportunity for you to talk about your grief and get support to understand what is happening and how to cope with all the changes.

How to make an appointment:

Please contact the Social Work Department at (01) 8327535. A Social Worker will speak to you about our services and your own support needs before an appointment is set up. We sometimes have a short waiting list for an appointment.

