

Bereavement and Loss

Your University at your side: Mental Health and Wellbeing at the University of Wolverhampton:

- provide free and confidential individual counselling
- offer non-judgemental support and understanding
- are professionally trained
- are experienced in dealing with a wide range of problems
- offer a variety of ways to help: individual counselling, online and email counselling, workshops and groups, and self-help leaflets.

Counselling can:

- enable you to develop your strengths
- offer you the chance to focus on and understand your difficulties
- enable you to make positive decisions and changes help you to develop the skills and resources necessary to cope
- help prevent small problems from growing out of hand

Get in touch

You can make an appointment to see a counsellor by filling out the Contact Us form at www.wlv.ac.uk/SSW, alternatively, you can come along to one of our drop-in services. For more information go to the web address above and click on the Mental Health and Wellbeing option. From here you will find a wealth of useful information and self-help tools as well as our Drop-ins and Group activities.



Bereavement and loss

A leaflet to help you when you lose someone or something important to you.



University Counselling Service

What is loss and grief?

Loss or grief can be experienced when someone we love dies or when we lose something very important to us, through say, divorce or a break-up. Other types of loss may include the loss of a beloved pet, our health, our job and status, or a treasured possession. Such loss or grief can feel overwhelming, and result in a person feeling isolated and confused.

A natural process

Loss and grief are natural processes which we need to go through in order to continue with our normal lives. The death of someone close may be one of the most severe forms of loss we have to experience.

Coping with bereavement or a major loss can be particularly difficult both emotionally and physically at university, for a variety of reasons.

Feelings we may experience after a major loss or when someone dies:

- loneliness
- anger
- numbness or 'nothing'
- denial
- shock
- poor concentration
- feeling out of control
- irritability and/or tearfulness.

Additionally, we may find ourselves affected in the following ways:

- tightness in chest
- lack of energy
- socially withdrawn
- preoccupied
- unable to cope with daily tasks
- sleep and/or appetite disturbance.

How long will it take?

Everyone has their own natural grieving time which cannot be rushed.

Grieving is such an individual process that it would be impossible to put a time limit on when things will begin to become 'normal'.

We are likely to experience both good and bad days but most people find that gradually, as time goes by, things do become easier and the intensity of feelings is reduced.

Try not to:

- Try not to hold all your feelings inside. This will only work towards prolonging the pain and agony of your loss. Instead, expressing or verbalising your pain can help you make sense of it.
- Try not to avoid talking about it. Giving yourself permission to talk about your experience will help you get through this at a pace that will feel right to you.
- Try not to expect that you will be over it quickly. It will take time and you may need to give yourself space to allow for this.
- Try not to be too hard on yourself. Be kinder to yourself and gradually day-to-day activities will become easier to manage and you will feel less negative about yourself and about situations around you.

What might help?

- Talking to someone you trust can help you to start working through your feelings.
- Expressing your feelings can enable you to understand what your emotions are and to make sense of them.
- Trying to accept the range of feelings you might be experiencing and working through them will help you to start understanding the process you are going through.
- Finding a way to say goodbye can help you to begin to let go and grieve.
- Letting your tutor or manager know may enable you to manage your course or work better – allowing you space to grieve. If your work is affected speak to your tutor or manager, as it may be possible to get help with deadlines or workloads for a short while.
- Using the support services that you have around you will provide you with space and a listening ear.
- Keep some mementoes – if you have lost a person special to you perhaps you could keep a photo to remind you of them.

Finally, please remember

Losing a loved one can be hard under any circumstances. However, the process we go through is quite normal and gradually the pain of our loss and how we experience it will lessen and we can learn to live with it.

People you might want to contact:

- Your doctor
- NHS, tel: 111
- Cruse Bereavement Care – tel: 0844 477 9400
- The Samaritans, tel: 08457 90 90 90

Other useful websites

Cruse Bereavement Care:
cruse.org.uk

The Royal College of Psychiatrists:
rpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfo.asp

NHS (Northumberland, Tyne & Wear)
ntw.nhs.uk/pic - Use the leaflet search category "Self Help"

MIND mental health organisation:
mind.org.uk/information-support/a-z-mental-health/

Some of the things students have said about the University Mental Health & Wellbeing Service:

"Counselling gave me a time to express raw feelings. It gave me a release and felt like a safe place"

student
+ support
wellbeing

