How can I support my children?

Children grieve in a very real way, as their age and understanding of death allows. They often have questions which can be upsetting for adults. If children feel their questions are not heard, or not respected, they may bottle up their feelings, and possibly have more serious problems with this death, or others, in future.

Parents need to be honest with children and help them understand that death is natural - life, illness, old age, death - are all part of the cycle of life.

- Don't be afraid to show how you are feeling, it is helpful for children to know you are sad too.
- Tell school about the death, it will help teachers offer support.
- Remember children move in and out of their grief. Try to maintain some routine for them as death can bring feelings of insecurity.

If you are concerned about your child's ability to engage with normal life, or the effects of bereavement are lasting for a long time, please get in touch with Shetland Bereavement Support Service. SBSS has support workers specifically trained to offer specialist support to children and young people. All support sessions are 'person centred' which means they are led by the child/young person - support is provided at a level and pace appropriate to each individual child and their experience of grief.

SBSS can also provide memory boxes to families experiencing bereavement. Each box is full of engaging resources to encourage families to talk about their loved ones, reminisce and recall stories, develop skills to cope better with loss and grief, whilst creating a box of comforting memories. Boxes are customised to meet the specific needs of each family and cater for all ages of children. Boxes are free of charge and available on request - contact SBSS or, download a form from from our website.



Numbers you can call for immediate specialist support

Cruse Bereavement Care Scotland
National Bereavement Support Line
(Mon-Fri) 0808 802 6161
www.crusescotland.org.uk

At A Loss
Free, live web chat support service
www.ataloss.org/live-chat

Samaritans - 08457 90 90 90

Breathing Space
0800 83 85 87 (6pm-2am)

Shetland Sands - 07341 945028
admin@shetlandsands.co.uk
offers local support group sessions
(stillbirth and neo-natal deaths)

SFAD
08080 10 10 11 www.sfad.org.uk
(families affected by alcohol and drugs)

Useful websites for children and families

Child Bereavement UK
www.childbereavement.org.uk

Anna Freud (youth self care)
www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind

Hope Again
www.hopeagain.org.uk

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SHETLAND BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SERVICE

'minding you while you mind them'

Market House
14 Market Street
Lerwick
Shetland
ZE1 0JP
01595 743933
www.shetlandbereavementsupportservice.com
sbss@shetland.org

Charity Registered in Scotland SC037783

Initiated by the McArthur family in memory of George

Is it really confidential?

All our counsellors/support workers work to a strict code of ethics, which binds them to hold everything you say in confidence, unless they feel there is a risk to your life or the lives of others. You should know that our support workers are all supervised and they may talk to their supervisor about your experience, but they will never share information which may identify you.

How do I access the service?
The service is accessible to any adult or child residing in Shetland seeking support following a bereavement (whether recent or historic). Please contact us for a self referral form, or download a copy from our website.

How quickly will I get an appointment?
We aim to match clients with a support worker as soon as possible, ideally within 2 months, however, at times of high demand, we may have a waiting list in operation.

How long does counselling last?
Each appointment normally lasts around 50 minutes.

8-12 sessions are offered although this can be reviewed depending on how the client feels about their progress - some may require more sessions, others find 4-5 sessions adequate.

Where does counselling take place?
Support sessions will be held at Market House, Lerwick where suitable rooms are available. Most clients feel that meeting outside the home gives counselling a better atmosphere. Telephone and online sessions are availble by request for those who cannot travel into Lerwick.



How does counselling work?

This is a one-to-one relationship, where the client and the support worker meet to talk in confidence.

Shetland Bereavement Support Service believes it is important to offer a safe environment and a confidential and helpful partnership, in which the client can explore his or her feelings about what has happened.

We believe the client is the “expert” on his or her own life, and that, by using the counselling relationship to explore how he or she feels following the death, the client can move forward. That is not about forgetting the person who has died, but about finding a new way of living with the memories.

Each person is different, and so will react in a different way to the death which has brought them to seek support. Some people simply find that the chance to talk to someone “outside” the family and to have time for themselves in which to concentrate on their own feelings of grief is sufficient. For others, there may be feelings of anger or guilt, or some ambivalence in the relationship. Or there may be confusion as to why a death has occurred, or some difficulty in “making sense” of the death. These feelings may take longer to explore.

Sometimes people find that in facing one death, they are reminded of previous losses, and they may wish to talk about these also.

What does counselling cost?
Shetland Bereavement Support Service is a registered charity, and makes no charge for its service. However, like any charity, it is dependent on donations. If you find this service has been helpful and wish to make a donation it would be very much appreciated.

Our Justgiving page enables quick and secure donations online :
www.justgiving.com/sbss



What should I expect from my counsellor / support worker?

They will respect your confidentiality and will keep appointments to see you regularly.

They cannot take the pain of bereavement away but will support you while you work through it. You can expect your support worker to have a friendly manner and to respect you as an individual for whom counselling is a temporary, though valuable, step in coming to terms with your loss. It is not just a chat - it means facing the pains of grief and working at understanding the feelings.

What commitment is expected from me?
At your first session, your support worker will discuss with you the commitments on both sides which will form the basis of the counselling relationship. These will include such things as confidentiality and time keeping.

Because we work to a tight budget, and because all our support workers are volunteers, we would ask that you let the office know if you are unable to keep your appointment as far in advance as possible.

To cancel / re-arrange an appointment, please call: 01595 743933

We welcome feedback from you so that we can continue to develop and improve our service.

