



Coronavirus (Covid19)



BEREAVEMENT

From the Metropolitan Grand Almoner's Team and support from the members of Florence Nightingale Lodge No 706 - The Almoners Lodge.

The reality of what a wicked, random and vicious thing Covid 19 is, comes home to us as we hear of friends and brethren of long standing, passing to the Grand Lodge above. We must try to reflect and focus on the positive things and good times we shared with them over many years, including a few beers. Sadly, some of them die alone in hospital and very few of us are able to say farewell.

Issue 3 - June 2020

This briefing provides information on bereavement.

Reproduced with permission from the author and the Royal Naval Association
(<https://royal-naval-association.co.uk/> <<https://royal-naval-association.co.uk/>>) open to ex-naval personnel and others



Dear Brethren

I hope this finds you well and may that continue.

On to a very difficult subject, but I would like to remind us all, who have suffered, or may suffer bereavement in their families or of friends, of the help available to all of you.

How do I know what to do when someone dies?

Many will have prepared for this but many more, sadly, will not have. If you or someone you support has become bereaved it can be a confusing time following their passing and difficult to know what you need to do first, especially when you experience it for the first time. There can be some complex procedures to follow, depending on whether the person died in hospital, at home or a public place.

Where the person has died will also affect the type of documentation that you are given.

However there are good summaries of all aspects at <https://www.bereavementadvice.org/topics/what-to-do-when-someone-dies/> or call 0800 634 9494 (Mon-Fri 0900 -1700)

Remember you are not alone!

As I said in my previous note on bereavement, help and support is out there. Lockdown has restricted the usual personal support from family, friends, Almoners and other brethren, although they will be there for you. Just ask and try talking about your feelings.

There is a small list of bereavement councillors on Porchway

Grief is natural.

When someone close dies, family and brethren close to them can feel a spectrum of emotions that change over time. Every person's journey through grief will be different. There is no right or wrong way to grieve nor is there a timetable for how long your grief will last or how you should feel after a particular time. It is up to you and no-one's perceptions.

Are there any quick fixes?

The answer is no, it will take time but everyone finds what helps them adjust to bereavement.

However there are 6 ways to feel happier (see NHS suggestions at

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/feel-better-and-happy/>,

which are simple lifestyle changes to help you feel more in control and able to cope.

1. **Manage your stress levels** by finding ways to reduce it and getting regular exercise.
2. **Enjoy yourself** by doing things that you enjoy and help your emotional wellbeing by simple activities such as having a soak in the bath. Other options such as meeting up with friends for coffee can't happen due to social distancing and isolation. Try to avoid things that seem enjoyable at the time but make you feel worse afterwards, such as drinking too much alcohol or eating junk food.
3. **Boost your Self-esteem** by treating yourself as you would treat a valued brother, in a positive but honest way. Tell yourself positive things.
4. **Try for a healthy lifestyle** by **Limiting** your alcohol intake, Choosing a well-balanced diet, **Doing** some exercise and **Getting** enough sleep
5. **Talk and share** - We are social beings and communication is important to us all. Talking things through helps you to release tension, rather than keeping it inside. It will help strengthen your relationships and connect with people.
6. **Build your resilience** - Resilience helps us to cope with life's ups and downs and making something worthwhile out of painful times helps your resilience grow. Why not make something creative out of bad experiences to ease the pain?

Who can help me cope?

I previously mentioned Cruse for adults (see <https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/coronavirus-dealing-bereavement-and-grief> with Free Helpline of 0808 808 1677) and Winstons Wish (see <https://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus/> with Freephone Helpline 08088 020 021 and other e-support) for children and young people. The Sue Ryder site <https://www.sueryder.org/support-if-you-have-been-bereaved?> also provides much useful information in question format.

Cruse for adults primarily supports through its excellent website and a National Freephone Helpline of 0808 808 1677 open Monday-Friday 0930-1700 (excluding bank holidays) with extended hours on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings until 2000. In normal times, it has local services detailed on the website but these are curtailed at the moment.

Winston's Wish for children and young people operates through:

- 1) a National Freephone Helpline 08088 020 021 (open 0900 – 1700, Monday – Friday). This is being operated remotely so accessed currently by leaving a message on their voicemail with your first name and a contact number (with the caller's area code; a Helpline Practitioner calls back from a withheld number as soon as possible.
- 2) ASK email support via ask@winstonswish.org
- 3) Crisis Messenger by texting WW to 85258 (available 24/7).
- 4) an Online Chat service available on the website 1200 - 1600pm, (Wednesdays and Fridays).
- 5) Facebook groups (Adults Bereaved as Children and Supporting Bereaved Children and Young People) offering support with membership opening up the opportunity to connect digitally and share experiences.

What about the Masonic family?

The Metropolitan Grand Almoner and his Team are there for you in times of bereavement, or any other help, as are a number of charitable organisations within the MCF. Although **they are not trained** bereavement councillors in their own right they can always talk and point you in the right direction for more targeted support.

Please note that due to Covid 19, many Staff will be operating remotely and services may be restricted or even closed, do ring or check the website. www.mcf.org Email: info@mcf.org

If you need assistance call the 24/7 helpline on 07792 925071

Financial help available eg Bereavement Support Grant will be covered in a further update together with changes to access at end of life and celebration of lives well lived.

It may be of some comfort to know that there has already been discussion regarding a memorial service in the future for those who have passed during the crisis, in the various Orders of Masonry, In many cases, it has sadly not been possible to attend those funerals and commemorate our departed brethren with the marks of respect we would normally wish to observe; this will give us the opportunity to redress that.

Finally, the Metropolitan Grand Chaplain Office are willing to support you, in any way that they can. Again, if you need assistance and it is an emergency call the Metropolitan Grand Almoner Helpline on **07792 925071**.

Please distribute this widely, keep following government public health guidelines.

Look after your brethren and friends by phone, text, e-media or letter.

Your Almoner and the Almoner Liaison Officer is always there to assist and advise

Best wishes and stay safe, stay well and stay at home.

Yours s & f,

Darrel

Darrel Palmer - Metropolitan Grand Almoner





**Metropolitan Grand Almoner
Emergency Telephone Number**

07792 925071

MCF Contact Details

Switchboard: 020 3146 3333

**Confidential enquiry line:
0800 035 60 90**

**Grants to Charities:
0203 146 3337**

Email: info@mcf.org.uk