

GRIEF SUPPORT FOR PARENTS/ CARERS



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Introduction

This pack was created to help proactively support parents, carers, and families of a young person that has been referred to Star Bereavement when someone important has died. This guide aims to help them in their journey through healthy grief and help them to develop the necessary tools to move forward in their lives.

Healthy grief, what do we mean by this? Healthy grieving enables us to remember the importance of our loss—but with a newfound sense of peace, rather than hurt or pain. No two people will experience grief in the same way. The way we think and feel, the way our body and brain functions, and the way we interact with other people may all be affected. Finding our own ways of managing these feelings can help us move forwards through our grieving process.

What is grief?

Grief is a strong emotion that people experience when they lose someone or something that was close to them. It is a natural reaction, but it can affect us all differently.

Grief can occur from different types of loss. This includes death of a loved one, loss of a friendship, a break-up, a pet dying or moving away from home.

Some stages that people who are grieving may experience include denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. These stages can come in any order and last for different lengths of time.

Other reactions include confusion, forgetfulness, and trouble concentrating. Your body might experience fatigue, aches and pains, or headaches. It is important to take care of your physical health while you are coping with grief. Try to sleep well, exercise, and eat healthy foods.

Some common feelings experienced are sadness, anger, anxiety, shock, and loneliness. Some people might also experience a lot of guilt or self-blame depending on the situation.

As you are grieving it is important to find healthy ways to cope with your feelings and responses. Positive coping skills can help you start to feel better.

There's no time limit on grieving. Everyone goes through this process in their own way. Make sure that you take the time that you need. If you are having trouble coping on your own, it might be helpful to talk to someone.



Babies and Toddlers 0-2 years

- Limited/ no understanding of death and dying
- Experience of loss is separation
- Will be aware that someone important is missing
- May react physically and emotionally to the absence of a significant personfeeding and sleeping routines may be disrupted
- There may be increased separation anxiety
- Pick up on parental feelings of grief and changes in routine
- May regress and start behaving as if a younger child
- There may be an increase in tantrums

2-5 years

- Death viewed as temporary and reversible like sleep
- Have very concrete/ literal thinking patterns
- May think dead people have feelings and bodily functions
- May be concerned about causal effects that their thoughts, feelings, words or wishes led or contributed to the death

5-10 years

- Gain appreciation that death is final/irreversible
- Can become fearful as a result of their increased understanding of death and dying
- Develop understanding that death has a cause
- Most 8 year old's have a fully developed concept of death and understand external causes

10 years - adolescence

- There is an understanding of the long term consequences of loss
- Personal implications of death are being appreciated
- Justice, injustice and fate may be issues
- May be more comfortable talking to their peers rather than family members
- May withdraw and spend more time alone
- May demonstrate more anger and aggression
- Teenagers may seem more insecure and behave like younger children.





How to be a hero to your grieving child or teen



Listen to your child

It's important for your child to have a safe space to talk about their loved one and their feelings about the death/ what has happened. Actively listen to your child and validate their feelings. This can help them to create their unique story, which could help others in the future.



Allow for emotional expression

Allow your child to express their emotions in a safe space. They may experience a wide range of emotions, including: anger, sadness, pain, guilt, shame and other strong emotions. Sometimes, children are unable to verbalise what they are feeling. It's important not to minimise emotions, tell them how they should be feeling or trying to put a positive spin on things.



Encourage coping skills

Support your child to find healthy ways to cope with their grief by trying different activities as a family. E.g. breathing, yoga, taking a break, walks, artistic expression and crafts etc. Help identify activities that work well for your child and put together a plan for when overwhelming feelings arise.



Practice self-care

You must take care of yourself first before you can support your child. Do this by implementing healthy coping skills, developing a self-care plan, surround yourself with your support system and express your emotions- you will then be a role model.



Understand that grief comes in waves

Both you and your child will have easier and harder days, it's important that you are both given grace to grieve. Be as open as you can about it, if you are having a harder day and encourage the child or young person to do the same. This will help to prevent misunderstandings and so on.



Establish/ maintain family traditions

Think of ways that you can remember the loved one, as a family. These rituals can help keep the connection to the loved one strong, as some people fear that they may forget the person. Acknowledge that some traditions may be different going forward. Together, decide what traditions to keep and what new things you'd both like to try. New activities could include grief journaling, visiting the grave, planting something or sharing stories.



Ask for help and make new memories

It's hard to ask for help. Stay connected with your support system- encourage your child to identify trusted people for support. Look for local support resources in your area with others that understand grief.

Remind your child that it's okay to make new memories and be happy. Plan family days/activities: go for walks together, visit new places and make new traditions together.

Anger management cards/ images

Support with a young person's management of anger and emotions.

How to use the anger management cards/ images:

If you find a child or young person is acting out or having a difficult time expressing their anger, thoughts or feelings, use these cards to teach healthy anger management skills. Ask the child/ young person to choose one image and take 5 - 10 minutes to complete an activity. Keep checking in with the child/ young person to discuss how they were able to manage their anger or strong emotions.





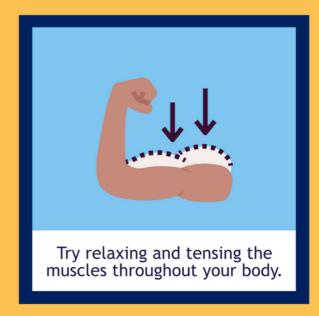
















10 things you can say instead of 'stop crying'



Crying is a healthy and natural emotional release. It's okay to feel sad and express your sadness by crying. People often mean well when they say, 'stop crying now, you are fine', but a child or young person is not feeling fine right now.

- 1. Its ok to not feel ok.
- 2. This is a really difficult time for you.
- 3. Do you want to talk to someone about how you feel?
- 4. I am here with you.
- 5. I hear what you are saying.
- 6. I'm here with you.
- 7. It doesn't feel fair.
- 8. You're so frustrated! It's okay, I'm here for you.
- 9. That was really scary, sad, etc.
- 10. If you need space, I'll stay close so you can find me when you're ready.

Happinessishereblog.com





Sleep - top tips

Change can be good sometimes, making simple lifestyle swaps can help you to sleep better.

Watch what the young person has to drink:

Cutting back on caffeine, energy drinks, coffee and cola is important before bed, instead the young person could enjoy a herbal tea or glass of water. Caffeine can also be found in drinks that we may associate with bedtime (such as hot chocolate), you could try chamomile tea instead- which is known for its calming effect. Caffeine can affect how long it takes us to fall asleep, how much sleep we have, and the quality of your sleep, because it is a stimulant.



Switch it off:

It is best to avoid playing the young person playing on their phone in the run up to bedtime, instead why not try finding a book to read or putting on some soothing music for them to listen to, this will allow the young person to relax naturally and switch off from the day's stresses and worries.



Good sleep doesn't just mean plenty of sleep:

It means the right kind of sleep! Any screens at bedtime are bad for sleep. Using screens before going to bed can extend the length of time it takes for us to fall asleep, it suppresses the production of your sleep hormone, melatonin. Melatonin is a natural hormone that is produced when it gets dark and helps us to feel tired at night. Some foods contain melatonin such as bananas, they also contain magnesium which helps to relax muscles.



Sleep in your bed:

The bed should be a place to relax. The bedroom should be somewhere that we associate with sleep. Where possible, you should try to remove distractions from the bedroom. Consider encouraging the young person to do schoolwork somewhere else in the home if you can.



Watch what you eat:

Light snacks as part of the bedtime routine can be helpful (but watch out for foods with high sugar and fat contents!). Instead, there are some foods that we can eat in the run up to bedtime to help with sleep. Tryptophan is an essential amino acid that helps us to sleep and is naturally present in dairy products, turkey and oats. Snacks like low sugar cereal, oats and milk, bananas, cherries and even cheese. So, a cup of warm milk can help us to sleep!



12 Steps for a quiet night

- 1. Go into your child's bedroom and look around. Is it safe, secure and not stimulating? Set up a calm and soothing environment to sleep in.
- 2. Consider whether daytime naps are causing your child to sleep less at night and reduce the time spent napping if necessary.



- 3. Give a light snack (such as milk and a biscuit) before bed if you think your child may be hungry.
- 4. Make sure your child has enough exercise during the day so that they are tired at bedtime.
- 5. Make sure you and your child and family are physically well. If illness is suspected wait until illness is passed before making changes.
- 6. Decide on a regular time to go to bed begin by setting the time close to the time your child currently goes to sleep and work towards the ideal time by changing it by ten minutes each night. Once there is a regular bedtime stick to it.



- 7. At least one hour before bedtime stop stimulating activities such as rough play, loud music and TV. Avoid drinks with caffeine, such as energy drinks.
- 8. Use a pre-bedtime settling routine (supported by symbols and other aids) that is the same every night and includes calm and enjoyable activities, such as a bath and bedtime stories.
- 9. Once in bed, use a set phrase, such as 'sleep well, see you in the morning', turn the lights off and leave the bedroom.



- 10. If your child gets up in the night put them back in bed with minimum attention.
- 11. In the morning give praise and cuddles for staying in bed.
- 12. Talk with other adults about how you are getting on. Ask them to support you to stick with the routine when it feels hard to do so often things get worse before they get better.





STOP - a useful assessment tool

A useful guide to help a young person assess the current situation and move forward slowly and safely in a way that works for them.

Stop - Take a step back/ away

Encourage the young person not to rush in, pause, and take some time, don't act too soon.

Time - Take time to breathe

Breathe in for a count of 4, hold for a count of 4 then breathe out for a count of 4, pause for a count of 4, then repeat.

Observe - Take your time

Ask: What are you thinking about? How do you feel? Is this fact or opinion? Accurate or inaccurate? Helpful or unhelpful?

Grief can be overwhelming. Encourage the young person to give themselves time to process their feeling sand adjust to what has happened and how this makes you feel.

Perspective - Understand what's happening

Give the young person space to observe themselves as if they are outside, looking in or as a 'fly on the wall'.

Ask: 'what would someone else make of this situation and what would they do?' Encourage them to think about what advice they would give to someone in that situation?

Ask: how important is this right now and will it still be important in 6 months?

With a little perspective we can choose what is best for us and find the most helpful solution for the situation and move forward in a way that works for us as individuals.



What can help grief?



1. Keep to routines and maintain structure

5. Help to strengthen memories of the loved one

2. Emotional support from parents/carers, adults and peers

6. Renewed hope: make plans for the future!

to process what has happened

3. Clear, accurate, ate accurate appropriation age information

Coping ideas- distractions that can help!

Do something PHYSICAL:

Exercise- running around Go for a walk Kick a ball about Skipping Sit ups Do something FUN:

Play your favourite game Listen to music Watch a comedy Bake a cake

Do something CREATIVE:

Drawing or doodling Painting or collage Paint nails Journal or write

Do something with OTHERS:

Visit friends or family
Speak to someone on the phone
Invite your best friend
over
Chat to someone you
trust

Do something COMFORTING:

Have a bath or shower Play with a pet Cuddle a teddy or pillow Take a nap Concentrate on something else:

Count anything around you can see Squeeze ice cubes

Mindful breathing

A big goal of mindful breathing is to create a calm, non-judgemental awareness, allowing thoughts and feelings to come and go without us getting caught up in them.

- ★ Sit comfortably, with your eyes closed and your back as straight as you can.
- ★ Bring your attention to your breathing.
- ★ Imagine that you have a balloon in your tummy. Every time you breathe in, the balloon inflates. Each time you breathe out, the balloon deflates. Notice the sensations in your abdomen as the balloon inflates and deflates. Your abdomen rising with the inhale, and falling with the exhale.
- ★Thoughts will come into your mind, and that's okay, because that's just what the human mind does. Simply notice those thoughts, then bring your attention back to your breathing.
- tikewise, you can notice sounds, physical feelings, and emotions, and again, just bring your attention back to your breathing.
- You don't have to follow those thoughts or feelings, don't judge yourself for having them, or analyse them in any way. It's okay for the thoughts to be there. Just notice those thoughts, and let them drift on by, bringing your attention back to your breathing.
- Whenever you notice that your attention has drifted off and is becoming caught up in thoughts or feelings, simply note that the attention has drifted, and then gently bring the attention back to your breathing.

It's okay and natural for thoughts to enter into your awareness, and for your attention to follow them. No matter how many times this happens, just keep bringing your attention back to your breathing.

www.getselfhelp.co.uk





A guide to grief journaling:

A young person grieving may be very happy one minute then feeling down the next. Young people can often find it difficult to express their emotions. A good way to help with this is through writing and drawing.

Keeping a grief journal can help express emotions without the feeling of being judged. It can be done in any way they want they can write, draw, or collage. What matters is that they are expressing themselves in their own way and examining the way that they are feeling in a healthy and safe manner.

What they will need:

- A journal, tablet/PC, loose sheets of paper or note pad
- · Pens, pencils, or paints
- Glue stick
- Scissors

Your journal should be unique to you, don't be afraid to experiment, there is no right or wrong way to create one. Some people may prefer to use paper others may prefer to use a tablet or PC.

The advantage of using paper is that you can cut and stick photo's, images etc. and you can also paint and draw in it as well as write in it.

Hints and tips to get you started:

Where to begin? To start with you can put your name, the date, and the name of your loved one that has died.

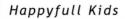
You could list the favourite places you liked to go with them.

You could write about what you miss about them the most?

You could do a drawing of them or stick a photo of them in to your journal.

Remember to end each entry on a positive note.

Just a couple of reasons to be thankful can go a long way to help them feel positive. If they struggle at any point they can come back to it later when they feel ready.



Making a memory journal

A memory journal is something the young person can keep forever and add new pages as they get older. Here are some ideas to get you started!

Your front page is the first thing you will see in your journal, you could make it your special persons favourite colour using glitter, paint, and coloured paper!

Someone even made a football shirt of their favourite football team with their loved one's name and age.



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You can write a letter to your special person to stick in the book, you could tell them how old you are and what happened when they died, you could explain how you felt and what life is like for you now. You could also tell them how you have changed, including your likes, dislikes, friends, and your daily routine.

Think about their favourite things, this could be music, food, games, pets, sayings, and quotes etc...

Think about how you would want these to look in your book, we can use photos, drawings, and writing.



Don't forget photos! Usually, people fill their book with photos, it's a great way to remember our special person

| Here are some things that I find difficult to tell you, but want you to know! | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|---|---|--|--|
| | Please talk to me about the person that has died. I need to talk about them over and over (in the right place and at the right time). | | I am a different person now- love me for who I am and please don't tell me the right and wrong things to do, just encourage me. | _ | If you are worried about what I say, just say that. I will tell you; listening without judging is a great help. | |
| | l dip in and out of my grief- a good laugh can help too. | | I am not going to recover- this isn't a cold or the flu. | _ | I don't know what I need just now probably just to know that people care and remember. | |
| | You won't upset me more by making me cry. I'm upset inside already. | | I am not brave or strong, I just have found a place to hide my feelings. | | Understand how painful it is to hear the word; MUM, DAD, SISTER, BROTHER - please do/ don't stop using them. | |
| | My world is painful and if you don't approach me l will feel even lonelier. | | If I look okay on the outside, that doesn't mean I'm okay on the inside. | | Look out for me and look after me. | |
| | I need help to make sense out of the senselessness. | | My whole world has been blown apart and I don't feel safe. | | I will find a new way forward; I just need time and help. | |
| | I need to hear the facts as | | I won't be over this in a | | | |
| | they are. | | day, week or month. | | Thank you for taking the time to read this | |
| | Please help me find a group of other people that have lost someone. | | I'm getting used to all the changes in my life, stay on the journey with me. | | and trying to help me! | |

A-Z of bereavement

A - Anger

Anger is a very normal feeling when someone in your family has died.
Angry at the person who has died, other people in the family, yourself, doctors, God.

B - Bereaved

Being bereaved is one way of describing what you are when someone close to you has died.

C - Confusion

You might not understand grief - it is a confusing time for everyone. It can help to talk to someone else in your family, a teacher or a professional.

D - Dreams

At a time when you really need to sleep, you may find yourself troubled by difficult dreams.

E - Emotions

Your emotions will be all over the place when someone you care about has died. You may feel lots of different things sad, angry, confused, worried, relieved, fed up. You may feel all of these at the same time.

F - Funerals

Funerals give us a chance to say goodbye and are a time to think about the person who died. You may not be sure whether you want to attend. It is okay, either way.

Whatever you need to do.

G - Guilt

Guilt is normal it may follow if the bereaved person feels they could have acted differently and so prevented a death.

H - Help

Lots of different people might say you should get some help. Help comes in lots of shapes and sizes and from many different people. You may not always think you need any help - and the time must be right for you. But it can be helpful to talk to someone who really wants to listen to you.

- Information

Sometimes it helps to find out more information about things that are worrying you - if you know what you are dealing with then it can be easier to sort things out.

J - Jokes

Do not feel bad. Laughter is normal and it is OK to laugh and tell jokes even after someone has died.

K - Keepsakes

Sometimes it's nice to have keepsakes to remind you of the person who died. This might be something like a watch or ring, or maybe an item of clothing you always used to borrow and get into trouble for.

L - Letting off steam

Sometimes your feelings can build up and explode, particularly angry feelings so it's good to find a safe way of letting off steam.

M - Missing

It's natural to miss someone after they have died. It is a big loss and often you will miss them when doing things, you used to do together or something they liked to do.

N - Not fair

It's normal to feel as though it's not fair when someone you care about has died. Why should it have happened in your family? What did the person do wrong? What did you do wrong?

O - Optimism

You may struggle to remain optimistic about the future when someone close has died. Your future is still important even though it may be very different to the life you had planned. Strive to hope on to your hopes and dreams for the future.

P - Parents

Parents will be grieving too, especially if their partner or child has died. This means they are not always emotionally available to offer you the support you need.

Q - Questions

Everyone has questions when someone they care about has died. You might have questions about medical facts, about death, grief and your feelings. However, you may also have to accept that some questions, such as why someone chose to take their own life, can never be answered. It's difficult but not impossible to live with not knowing the answer.

R - Relationships

Having had someone in your life die will change you as a person and some relationships may well be strained by this. It can sometimes be easy to lose touch with friends after someone has

S - Suicidal feelings

After someone important has died, those left behind may sometimes have suicidal feelings wondering what the point of living without that person. It is important to talk through these feelings with someone you can trust to listen to how you are feeling; you can call the Samaritans at any time of any day (116 123 Free from any phone).

⊤ - Talking

Talking helps. Talking about the person who has died, about what happened, about how you are thinking and feeling.

U - Upset

Just about everyone who has ever been bereaved will feel upset. Feeling upset has got within it bits of feeling sad, bits of feeling fearful, bits of feeling confused and bits of feeling as if everything has been taken and turned upside down.

V - Vulnerable

Feeling vulnerable can come with being bereaved. You don't expect people close to you to die especially if they were not old. The world can seem an unsafe, insecure place. It may make you worry more about other members of the family or about your own health.

W - Why?

Why is a small word for the biggest question? Why they died? Why they died in the way they did? No one can really answer the why questions, but it helps to have someone to listen while you ask them.

X - X-tra

Being bereaved brings with it a lot of extra stuff. You may find yourself with extra responsibilities more chores, looking after younger brothers or sisters. You may find yourself with extra worries or concerns. You may find yourself with extra stress. You may find yourself with extra stress. You may find yourself with extra-strong feelings, thoughts and reactions.

Y - Yelling

Yelling can help relieve some of your tension and frustration. Its normal and OK to lose your temper from time to time. You may find yourself yelling at those around you or you may find it helps to go off alone and yell at the sky. "I kept on yelling at my family and friends, for no real reason."

Z - Zzz Sleep

Zzz-sleep can be affected by a death in the family. You may find its hard to get to sleep because when your head hits the pillow, you find yourself thinking about what has happened and how you feel.

Remember.....Do what you need and don't worry about what others think!

It is ok to cry!
It is ok to be sad!

It is also ok to smile again Your person would want that for you......

Don't be afraid to talk about your person. They are still your Mother, Father, son, daughter, Sister, Brother, Grandparent, friend. I mean why wouldn't you? They were a huge part of your life and you loved them dearly......Allow yourself to grieve..... (Some relationships are more complicated and you may not feel this way and this is also very normal)

Helplines, Websites & Contacts

Emergency 999

If you have hurt yourself or you're concerned about someone else, call the police or ambulance service. Explain your concerns and allow the handler to provide the most appropriate response.

Star Bereavement

Further information at: https://starbereavement.org.uk/ Email: info@starwakefield.org.uk

Samaritans

Free <u>Call 116 123</u> Email:<u>Jo@samaritans.org</u>

Samaritans offer free emotional support, 24/7 to anyone in distress, despair, emotional crisis or having thoughts of suicide.

Social Care Direct

0345 850 3503 For any safeguarding concerns about an adult or a child.

Turning Point

Talking Therapies

01924 234860

Email: wakefield.talking@turning-point.co.uk
Support for mental health issues, online support,
group support and wellbeing workshops. Can
self-refer from 16 years +.

Andy's Man Club

<u>Weekly support meetings fo</u>r men to talk. <u>www.andysmanclub.co.uk</u>

The Mix

0808 808 4994 or Text THEMIX to 85258
Support for Under 25's available 24/7
We are here to help you take on any challenge you're facing. Talk to us via our online community, on social through our free, confidential helpline or our counselling service.

WF I can

(Wf-I-can.co.uk)
Wakefield online chat for young people up to the age of 25.

CAMHS

Monday to Friday, 9:00am – 5:00pm Wakefield CAMHS SPA team: 01977 735865.

Monday to Sunday, 9:00am – 8:00pm For urgent support that cannot wait until the next day, you can contact the CAMHS ReACH team on: 01977 735865.

Sue Ryder

https://www.sueryder.org/ Online Bereavement Support. Help line 0808 164 4572

Leeds suicide

bereavement service

(<u>Open Monday – Thursday 9am – 5pm, and</u> <u>Friday 9am – 4:30pm) - Helpline 0113 305 5800</u>

https://www.leedsmind.org.uk/suicide-

bereavement-services-west-yorkshire/

Young Minds

(www.youngminds.org.uk

Young Minds are a mental health charity for children, young people, and their parents, making sure all young people can get the mental health support they need. <u>Hopeline UK 0800</u> 068 4141

Papyrus

www.papyrus-uk.org

HOPELINE UK is a confidential support and advice service for: Children and Young People under the age of 35 who are experiencing thoughts of suicide.

Child Bereavement

UK

www.childbereavementuk.org

Child Bereavement UK supports families and educates professionals when a baby or child of any age dies or is dying, or when a child is facing bereavement.

Winston's Wish

(Helpline 08088 020 021

The charity offers a wide range of practical support and guidance to bereaved children, their families and professionals.

www.winstonswish.org

Childline

(0800 11 11

www.childline.org.uk
Counselling service for children and young
people up to the age of 19.

Night Owls

A confidential support line for children, young people, their parents, and carers who live in Bradford, Leeds, Calderdale, Kirklees and Wakefield.

Call us on 0800 1488244
Text us on: 07984 392700
Chat on online through our website
www.wynightowls.org.uk

Grief Encounter/Grief

Talk

Grief helpline 0808 802 0111 9am - 9pm weekdays.

grieftalk helpline - Grief Encounter - Support for bereaved children and young people

Wakefield Families

Together

(https://www.wakefieldfamiliestogether.co.uk/co mmu nity-support/family-hubs/

Adult Grief Support

Prince of Wales Hospice, Tel: 01977 708868
https://www.pwh.org.uk/contact
Please contact self-referral by emailing
bereavement.pwh@nhs.net or by phone 01977
781452.

Helpful resources for parents/ carers

Websites for information on supporting grieving children

Childhood Bereavement Network

www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk

Winston's Wish

www.winstonswish.org

Grief Encounter

www.griefencounter.org.uk

Hope Again

www.hopeagain.org.uk

Websites for grief support for parents/ carers

West Yorkshire and Harrogate Grief and Loss Support Service www.griefandlosswyh.co.uk

The Prince of Wales Hospice Bereavement Service Wakefield

www.pwh.org.uk/our-care/for-carers-and-families/w-d-bereavement-service

Cruse Bereavement Support

www.cruse.org.uk

Sue Ryder Grief Kind

www.sueryder.org/how-we-can-help/bereavement-information/grief-kind

Books for bereaved parents/ carers

Grief Works: Stories of life, death and surviving - By Julia Samuel

Thinking Out Loud: Love, Grief and Being Mum and Dad - By Rio Ferdinand

The Year of Magical Thinking - By Joan Didion

<u>It's OK That You're Not OK: Meeting Grief and Loss in a Culture That Doesn't Understand</u> - By Megan Devine

Grief podcasts

Griefcast - Cariad Lloyd

Grief Works - Julia Samuel

The Art of Dying Well - University of St Marys

Terrible, Thanks for Asking - Nora McIrney

Grief Encounters - Urban Media

Grief is My Superpower - Mark Lemon

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