

# Our NHS People

Understanding different  
bereavement practices and  
how our colleagues may  
experience grief

21st December 2020

Drafted by the National Health and Wellbeing Team,  
NHS England and NHS Improvement



# Introduction

The NHS employs over 1.3 million people who make up a diverse workforce from all different walks of life. There are many different cultures, religions and beliefs celebrated across the organisation and as such, it is essential that line managers understand how to support colleagues in a compassionate and inclusive manner when colleagues are experiencing a bereavement.

Given the impact Covid-19 has had on the general population, particularly those from BAME communities, we know that our NHS people are likely to experience a bereavement during the pandemic. This could be through losing patients when working on front-line services, as well as experiencing personal bereavements of family members, friends and colleagues who have died during the pandemic. In addition to this, the previous rules around lockdown and social distancing will have had an impact on how colleagues grieve or celebrate the life of a lost one. It is possible that next year will see a lot of memorial services in lieu of funerals.

This document aims to encourage and support line managers to be compassionate leaders who consider the different ways in which our colleagues may experience a bereavement, and what practices different religions and

cultures may follow. It is asked that readers note that this guidance is meant as a starting point, providing an overview for line managers. Some of the descriptions in this guidance may provide a simple overview of what can be a challenging and complex time for individuals. Colleagues are asked to recognise that not all staff who relate to one of the religions or cultures outlined in this document will follow each practice discussed. Across all religions and cultures there will be variances in how they practice and it is important to communicate with colleagues and encourage open and honest conversations where staff feel comfortable sharing their beliefs.

This guidance may also be a valuable resource for staff wishing to learn more about the cultural beliefs and practices their patients, families and carers may wish to follow when experiencing a bereavement.



# Considerations for line managers

We are all individuals and the ways in which we deal with death and grief can vary. When a colleague approaches their line manager to advise of a bereavement, line managers should feel equipped to support them in a compassionate and empathetic manner.

Line managers are invited to use this resource to learn more about the bereavement practices of different religions and cultures, and how they can then support colleagues experiencing grief or bereavement, noting the cultural differences experienced by our diverse workforce, all of whom have been subject to government restrictions impacting on their normal grieving practices.

Our diverse workforce also includes a number of colleagues who have family members living abroad and may need to travel abroad to attend a funeral. Allocating one day of compassionate leave to attend the funeral in this instance would not be beneficial, and consideration should therefore be given to the time it may take for colleagues to travel abroad to attend funerals. It is also likely that given the

current pandemic and restrictions on travel, colleagues may not be able to visit family for several months and therefore may wish to take compassionate leave later in the year, when they are able to mourn with their family.

Line managers must not assume that because of an individual's affiliation to one specific belief system that they will follow all of the principles outlined in this resource. Communication is key to finding out what matters to them as an individual. Similarly, our NHS colleagues may relate to more than one culture or religion and the way in which they practice their beliefs may be different to what is outlined in this resource. As a line manager it is important to get to know your colleagues and remember that each person will have different needs.



# Statutory bereavement or compassionate leave

**Anyone classed as an employee has the statutory right to time off if:**

- ➔ their child is stillborn from 24 weeks of pregnancy or dies under the age of 18 (in April 2020, a new legal right called Jack's Law mandates that parents who suffer the loss of a child aged under 18 will be entitled to two weeks' statutory paid leave),
- ➔ a 'dependant' dies, for example their partner, parent, child, or someone else who relied on them.

There is no statutory recommendation on how many days an organisation should offer staff for bereavement or compassionate leave, however the NHS Terms and Conditions and a number of local HR policies suggest five working days, at the discretion of a line manager. This means, for example, if a bereavement has particularly impacted the health and wellbeing of a staff member, if they need time off to adjust to changes to their caring responsibilities, or if they need additional time to travel abroad to attend a funeral, line managers can compassionately approve the extension of leave to support that individual.

Line managers are encouraged to demonstrate compassionate leadership when colleagues request bereavement leave, taking into account the personal situation of the colleague asking for support. It is possible that the colleague requesting compassionate leave is wishing to attend the funeral of an auntie who raised them, and therefore the loss to them is like that of losing a parent or guardian.

Demonstrating compassionate leadership will create cultures where staff feel supported at work and where colleagues feel able to openly talk about their beliefs and experiences, without concern of being judged.



# Tips for line managers and colleagues

## When a colleague informs you that they are going through a bereavement.

- Express your condolences and make it clear that they are not expected to work on the day that their loved one has died.
- Be aware of your local HR police on bereavement or compassionate leave, and speak with the colleague to consider how much time they may need to make funeral arrangements or fulfil religious or cultural traditions, such as attending a funeral or care for dependants.
- Identify the way in which they would prefer you to keep in touch.
- Ask them how much they would like you to tell their colleagues about their bereavement.

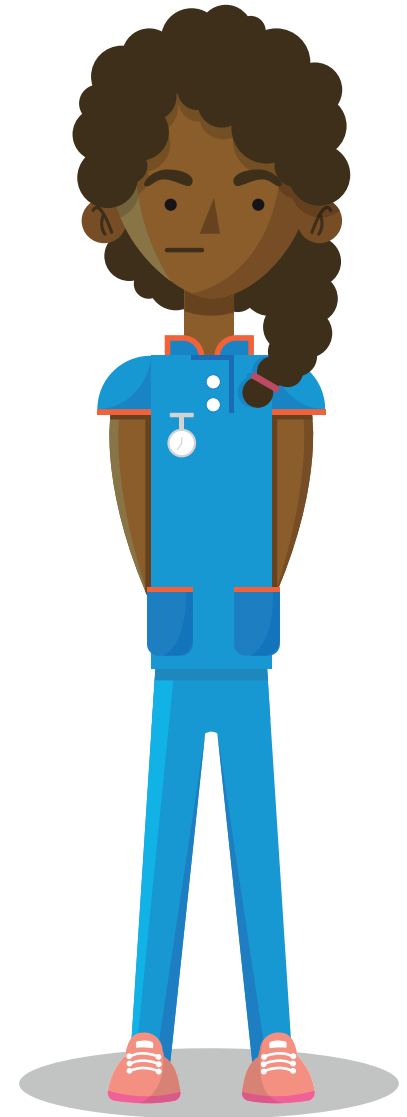
## When a colleague is ready to return to work.

- It is possible that a colleague may request a phased return to work or to work flexible hours to help support their transition back to work. In this instance, line managers should remember that each colleague is different and how you support them will vary dependant on their individual circumstance.
- Be open to flexible working provisions. Flexible working options can be particularly helpful to bereaved employees in the short and longer term, particularly if the bereavement has led to changes in personal circumstances, such as caring responsibilities.
- Consider a phased return to work. A phased return to work is a way of enabling employees to return to their duties in a gradual way. It is typically adopted following illness or injury through an occupational health referral, but it can also be helpful for providing a supportive and manageable return for those that have been bereaved. If a bereaved staff member returns to work on a phased basis, they will work a reduced number of hours at first, followed by a gradual increase in workload until they reach their normal number of hours. A phased return to work usually lasts anywhere between two and six weeks but can be extended if necessary. A phased return to work plan should cater to the bereaved staff member and their specific needs.
- Be sensitive to requests for time off. It is important to be sensitive to and accommodating of requests for time off where possible, especially around anniversaries or other special memorial events.

# Tips for line managers and colleagues

## When a colleague returns to work after a bereavement.

- Talk to the colleague about their wellbeing. If they are working a phased return or flexible hours, check in with the colleagues to ensure the arrangement is working for them or if amendments need to be made.
- Offer support where appropriate, but do not take offence if they do not accept further help. It is possible they will have family or friends already helping them for example, or they may prefer to take care of everything on their own. Respect their decision but be there for them if they change their mind.
- Remember that every emotion is normal and there is no right or wrong way to experience grief.
- Listen to them if they wish to talk. If someone opens up to you about how they are feeling, it can be difficult to know how to respond. Just listening to them can be very helpful.
- Signpost support where appropriate. If you feel that a bereaved employee requires more support than you or other colleagues can provide, it might be best to recommend professional therapy or access to services such as Occupational Health or with their GP. There are also a number of bereavement support and grief counselling organisations that can help people with different types of loss, including loss of a child and bereavement by suicide.
- A bereaved person often has lots of support in the first days and weeks of their loss, but this support can fade away after a few months. Bereaved people can feel grief for the rest of their life and find it difficult to manage without their loved one for years after the death. Consider making a reminder note to check in with the person at intervals, when grief can re-present.



# How to use this resource

It is key to remember that everyone is different and the ways in which we deal with death and grief can vary. As a line manager it is important to get to know your our colleagues and remember that each member of our colleagues will have different needs.

- Use this resource as a starting point to considering the different bereavement practices that our diverse staff may follow.
- Proactively consider how Covid-19 will impact colleagues, particularly considering the potential for colleagues to experience delayed grief and how this may affect their health and wellbeing.
- Have open and honest conversations with your colleagues and share (where comfortable) information on your beliefs and cultures.
- Demonstrate good leadership by being understanding and showing empathy when a colleague is experiencing a loss.
- Be compassionate and ask if they need to talk.
- Check in with colleagues and keep communication channels open. Across the NHS colleagues are working from home every day, it is important to check in and be observant of any changes to demeanour or appearance.
- Where possible, work with HR colleagues to review all current HR and bereavement policies and processes. It is important to know what the next steps are and consider where there are opportunities to make updates to protocols given our learning from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Liaise with local HR and Health and Wellbeing Leads to understand what internal and external support is available to our NHS people and how colleagues can access this support. This could include access to chaplaincy and prayers rooms in the organisation, access to support through our colleagues networks, linking in with local and national bereavement charities or accessing peer support through colleagues, mentors or coaches.
- At an appropriate time, encourage colleagues to complete their ESR data and share information on their beliefs.

# Bereavement support for our NHS people

During Covid-19, a range of bereavement resources have been put in place to support our NHS our colleagues. These resources include:

- ➔ **Access to a free national confidential bereavement support line**, operated by Hospice UK, available from 8:00am – 8:00pm, seven days a week.  
**Call 0300 303 4434**
- ➔ **Access to a suicide support mental health app** (Stay Alive by the charity Grassroots) to support those experiencing suicidal ideation or those concerned about others.
- ➔ **Guidance on how to be a good leader during times of bereavement** and a selection of resources for further learning and to support our colleagues facing bereavement

**<https://people.nhs.uk/guides/bereavement-support-during-covid-19/>**

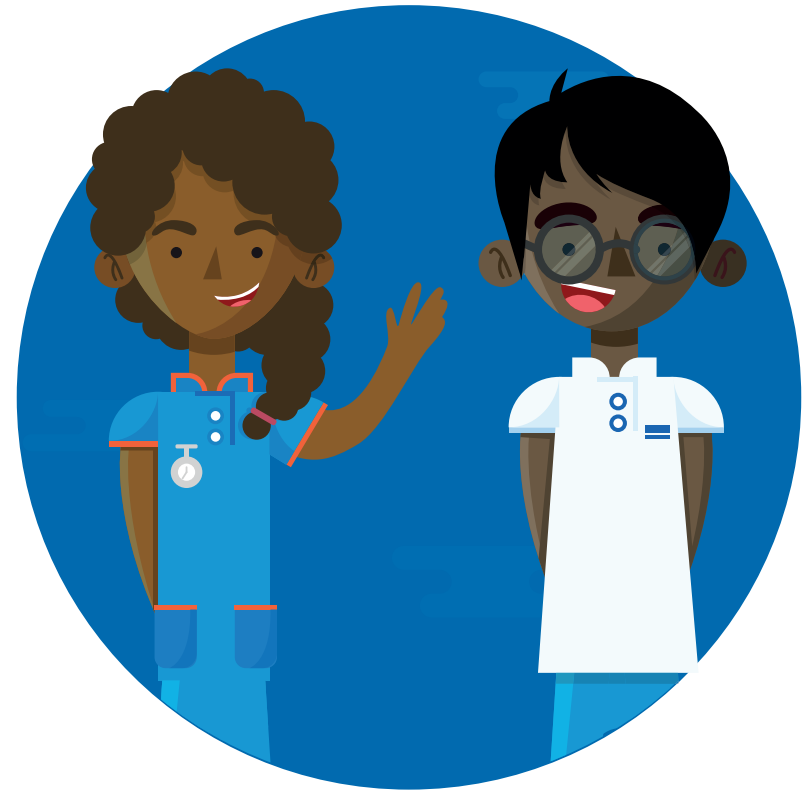




# Bereavement practices broken down by religion and culture

The next few pages outline the potential different bereavement practices of a selection of religions and cultures. This list is not exhaustive and there are other religions and cultures that our NHS colleagues may identify with. These examples have been chosen as they are the top recorded religions or cultures that our NHS people have submitted through ESR and various staff feedback surveys.

As referenced throughout this resource, the information in this document is meant as a starting point to encourage line managers to consider the diversities of our NHS colleagues and how they can compassionately support colleagues during a bereavement. Across all religions and cultures, there will be variances in how people practice and it is important to communicate with colleagues and encourage open and honest conversations where staff feel comfortable sharing their beliefs.





# Buddhism

The death of a loved one in Buddhism is considered an important event that is marked by specific Buddhist funeral rites. As Buddha himself was cremated, many Buddhist funerals involve cremation rather than burial. It is also possible for Buddhists to request a natural burial as an environmentally-friendly return to the earth that is compatible with the Buddhist beliefs of samsara (the cycle of life).

Buddhists traditionally hold mourning services on the third, seventh, 49th and 100th day after the death of a loved one.



## → Considerations for line managers:

- When authorising compassionate leave, line managers should take into account the above mentioned mourning services that Buddhist colleagues may practice. It is possible that colleagues may wish to take the third, seventh, 49th and 100th day after the death of a loved one as leave, as well as the date of the funeral.



## Christianity

In traditional Christian theology, after death people encounter the judgement and mercy of a loving God. When a Christian dies, it is seen as the end of his or her life on earth and as such, a funeral is held for friends and family to grieve for the person who has died and give thanks for their life. Christianity is divided into many different groups called denominations, which can more broadly be split into three branches: Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox. Whilst there are variances in the funeral and bereavement practices across the denominations, it is common for Christians to ask the minister or priest of their church to come and offer prayers and comfort during the difficult time, occasionally performing specific rituals during those last minutes of life.

Catholics believe in the afterlife and as such, their funerals include prayers for the deceased's soul and will typically include a mass during the service. Protestant Christian funerals are usually held in a place of worship such as a church or in the chapel of a funeral home. The funeral will often focus on celebrating the life of the deceased, celebrating that a loved one is now in Heaven. In Orthodoxy (including Eastern Orthodox and "Oriental" or Coptic/ Ethiopian Orthodox) cremation is not permitted and funerals will therefore take place as a burial, ideally conducted as soon as reasonably possible after death.





Across the Christian denominations, there are variances in mourning practices. Traditionally, the Catholic Church suggests that a spouse should spend a year and a day in mourning of their loved one. Grandparents and siblings are to spend three months in mourning, with the heavy mourning time lasting 30 days. Other family members should spend thirty days in mourning. Protestant Christianity does not have a prescribed amount of time for the period of mourning. Since the funeral is usually held within a week of the death, that period of time from the death to the burial is considered the time of mourning.

Bereaved members of the Orthodox Church traditionally will not go to work for a week after the funeral. The full mourning period can last 40 days, and usually there will be memorials (called "panikhida" / "mnemosynon" / "parastas") celebrated with a priest (either in church or at home) on the 3rd, 9th, and 40th day, then usually after three and six months, and thereafter usually annually (as well as in many cases on special anniversaries such as birthdays and wedding anniversaries). The departed are also remembered specifically on each Saturday of Souls (or Soul Saturday), a day set aside for the commemoration of the dead.

### → Considerations for line managers:

- As with all cultures and beliefs, there are variances in how the many Christian denominations will practice after a bereavement, and in how they choose to mourn the loss of a loved one.
- Line managers should communicate with colleagues to understand and learn about their practices and consider how to compassionately support them.



# Hinduism

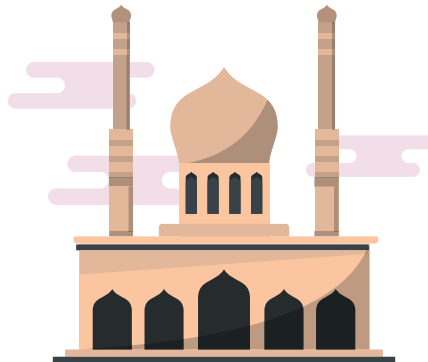
Hindu tradition suggests that when a person dies, where practical they remain at home before they are taken to the cremation venue. The cremation is then done as quickly as possible after a person dies (preferably within 24 hours) so that the soul can find a new body to inhabit. Hinduism strongly believes in reincarnation and the belief that the soul is eternal. In some Hindu communities, after the cremation there are rituals bhajans (hymns and songs of praise) as well as the Bhagawad Geeta are sang with loved ones for the next 13 days. This is because it is believed that for the first nine days after cremation, the soul is still connected to the body. During days ten to twelve, the soul will leave the body. There is then a ceremony called the Shraddha on the 13th day to mark that the soul has left the body.

For those living in India, on the day following a Hindu funeral the ashes are scattered in the River Ganges or the nearest river. Hindus living outside India may choose to repatriate their loved one's ashes, but

this is not always practical or affordable. Alternatively, many Hindus are now choosing to scatter ashes at a local body of water or at a preferred place of importance.

If the bereavement is of a child, in Hinduism there is traditionally no mourning period. This is because children are innocent and considered as sinless, therefore no mourning is required.

On the first anniversary of a death, a Hindu family will hold a memorial event that honours their loved one's life. This event is called a 'sraddha' and is an event that pays homage to the person who has passed.



## → Considerations for line managers:

- Line managers may need to consider that Hindu colleagues living in England may wish to travel to grieve with family members or to scatter the ashes of their loved one.
- Line managers may also wish to be aware that Hindu men traditionally do not shave until the funeral has taken place.



# Islam

In Islam, death is accepted and viewed as a natural part of life. The belief that the deceased has moved to an afterlife is an important understanding that helps the bereaved cope with their suffering. Islamic funeral arrangements begin immediately after the death of a loved one. According to Islamic law, they must be buried as soon as possible. Cremation is forbidden in Islam, so the body is buried as soon as possible from the time of the death. Traditionally, only men were permissible to attend the burial, however more recently some Muslim communities will allow women to be present.

Upon death, those with the deceased will pray for the departed, and begin preparations for burial. Grief is normal and it is natural and permissible to cry. The main steps involved are washing the body of the deceased, shrouding it, performance of the funeral prayer and finally burial, but never cremation. The washing and shrouding are performed only by selected relatives and

community members due to the intimacy involved with the body. Due to the profound personal, social and spiritual significance of such an event, you may find many people attending the funeral prayer.

After a Muslim funeral service and burial, the immediate family will typically gather in their home to pray and receive guests for the first three days. During these three days of mourning, the community will usually provide food for the family as cooking is not done. On the fourth day after death a special prayer ceremony is held. The mourning period may be extended up to 40 days, but this can vary depending on the family or regional customs. Traditionally, a Muslim widow is allowed four months and 10 days of mourning, during which she is not permitted to re-marry or interact with other men. This tradition is to rule out whether she is pregnant, as well as give her time to come to terms with the loss.

## → Considerations for line managers:

- As with all cultures and beliefs, there are variances in how Muslim colleagues will practice after a bereavement, and in how they choose to mourn the loss of a loved one. Some female Muslims may present at work in black mourning clothes for 40 days after the death of a loved one.
- It is also possible that they may not wish to speak to any male, single Muslim colleagues during this period.





# Judaism

In Judaism, the funeral will usually take place within 24 hours of someone passing. Shiva ('sitting' in Hebrew) begins straight after the funeral and lasts for seven days. Shiva refers to the first period of mourning that takes place in the seven days following a Jewish funeral. On the first day of Shiva, a candle is lit and left to burn throughout the week. The bereaved family will stay at home during this time to mourn and pray. No members of the family will work or participate in everyday activities during Shiva.

One Jewish funeral custom that may be observed is of the mourners ripping off pieces of material from their own clothes. This ritual is a demonstration of their grief, with the visibly torn garment traditionally being worn for the week following the death.

After the death of a loved one, there is traditionally an annual memorial on the anniversary of the death. There are also a number of other religious days of remembrance, including the holiday of atonement (known as Yom Kipur), and the Shemini Atzeret holiday at Passover. On both holidays, mourners will attend their synagogue in remembrance of their loved ones.



## → Considerations for line managers:

- When authorising compassionate leave, line managers should take into account the above days of remembrance, as colleagues may wish to take these dates as compassionate leave to be with their loved ones.
- If line managers are contemplating sending condolences to the family, traditionally Jewish people do not send flowers to funerals. Guests are encouraged to give donations, or tzedakah, as a tribute to the deceased, with the family suggesting an appropriate charity. It is important to communicate with your colleague to ascertain what would be most well received at this sensitive time.



# Sikhism

The Sikh funeral is known as Antam Sanskaar, meaning "the last rite of passage". The focus of the funeral ceremony is not loss and grief, but celebration that the soul has an opportunity to re-join Waheguru, the Wondrous Giver of Knowledge, the Sikh name for God. Sikhs believe in cremation, although in exceptional circumstances a burial may be permitted (if cremation is impossible). A Sikh cremation will usually involve the ashes being submerged into a river, with no monument erected for the person who has passed away.

In Sikhism the time and place of the mourning period is determined by the immediate family - starting on the day of death. The bereaved family will carry out a devotional reading of the entire Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh holy scripture either at the deceased's home or the local gurdwara and will recite religious text daily.

In England, the mourning period is normally from the announcement of the deceased's death until the day of the actual cremation. During this period family and friends attend the deceased's home to pay respect to the immediate family. In India, the cremation takes place as quickly as possible after a person dies, either that day or the next day depending on time of death, followed by the reading of the Sri Guru Granth Sahid.



## → Considerations for line managers:

- Line managers need to be mindful that the mourning period could be anytime between 5 to 14 days, depending on the date of death until the day after of the cremation. During this period, the deceased's immediate family members have prayers either at home or the gurdwara where family attendance is compulsory.
- Line managers should also be mindful that if sending condolences to the family, Sikh funeral flowers are typically orange and white chrysanthemums, which are mourning blooms in India and throughout many parts of Asia. It is also possible some families would prefer charitable donations to receiving flowers.



# Atheism, Agnostic or Humanist

Colleagues who do not identify with a specific religion may consider themselves as one of the above.

- **Atheist:** those who do not believe or have little belief in the existence of God).
- **Agnostic:** those who are unsure of their beliefs or who do not believe humans can definitively know if there is a God.
- **Humanist:** those who believe that human experience and rational thinking provide the only source of both knowledge and a moral code to live by.

For colleagues who identify as one of the above, funeral practices will vary and could include either a cremation or burial. The service might be hosted by a religious practitioner with whom the bereaved had a relationship with, for example a vicar from the local community, or by a life celebrant or humanist celebrant.

It is also possible that colleagues may choose not to host a funeral or mourn the loss of a loved one. This is the choice of the individual and line managers are encouraged to support colleagues in a compassionate way without questioning their beliefs.

## → Considerations for line managers:

- Line managers are encouraged to be aware of each individual team members belief (where this information has been willingly shared) and offer support as appropriate.
- Where colleagues have chosen not to have a funeral or have declined the offer of bereavement leave, line managers should continue to sensitively check in with the colleague and offer support where appropriate.

# Other cultural practices

## Nine-Nights

Some Caribbean and West Indian cultures may celebrate the passing of a loved one through Nine-Nights, a celebration of life held on the ninth night after the passing. During the service, friends and family are invited to view the body to pay their last respects. Once the coffin is lowered, loved ones will throw a handful of earth on the coffin and male mourners will then cover the coffin with earth. This is traditionally done whilst everyone sings. Female mourners may then cover the mound of earth with flowers, whilst singing a song called "good night", representing putting the deceased to bed.

Family and friends will attend the Nine-Nights celebration, which is often seen as a community event. There will likely be games (for example playing dominoes), music, reminiscing with memories and stories, cultural dancing and the sharing of traditional foods.



## Day of the Dead

The Day of the Dead is an annual Mexican holiday celebrated throughout Mexico and by people of Mexican heritage. The multi-day holiday involves family and friends gathering to pray for and remember friends and family members who have died, helping support their spiritual journey. In Mexican culture, death is viewed as a natural part of the human cycle. Day of the Dead is considered a day of celebration because loved ones awaken and celebrate with you. During Day of the Dead festivities, prayers are said for those who have passed and food is both eaten by living people and given to the spirits of their departed ancestors as ofrendas ('offerings').



# Other cultural beliefs

## Filipino

We have seen evidence that Covid-19 has had a disproportionate impact on our BAME colleagues, in particular with colleagues from a Filipino background. As with all the religions and cultures outlined in this resource, there are many regional variances to bereavement practices across the Philippines. A high proportion of the Filipino population follow the practices of Catholicism, and as such from the day of the death of a loved one, friends and family will gather at the home of the deceased in prayer. Traditionally forty days of prayer will then be held to help the deceased reach the afterlife.

Typically preceding a Filipino funeral is a wake that lasts anywhere from three to seven days. This allows family members who live far away to have enough time to arrive. The immediate family members would not usually work during this wake period. After the funeral has taken place, immediate family members and friends will mourn the deceased for a long time. In some cultures it is not uncommon for a widow or a woman who has lost her children to wear black for the rest of her life. It is also not uncommon for the bereaved family to hold a mass for the deceased several times during the year that they pass. In the Catholic Church, which many Filipino colleagues practice, All Souls' Day (2 November) will also be observed and respects will be paid to the dead.

## Chinese

A Chinese funeral usually takes place over seven days. The mourning period can last for 49 days, with weekly prayers recited by the family every seven days. A final ceremony, signifying the end of the mourning period, may be held after 100 days. According to Chinese funeral custom, elders should not show respect or offer prayers if the person who died was younger than them. If the person was unmarried, their body is not brought into the family home and will remain at the funeral home as they did not have any children to conduct funeral rites for them. If a child or infant dies, they are buried in silence without a ceremony.

As in many Asian cultures, the colour white is associated with death in China, however if the person who died was over 80 years, guests may wear shades of pink to the funeral ceremony as it is considered a longevity milestone, and people are encouraged to celebrate their life rather than mourn.

# Death by suicide or a traumatic death

Bereavement due to a death by suicide, of a family member, carer, friend, colleague or acquaintance, can be incredibly traumatic for an individual and, alongside grief, can lead to feeling of guilt that you weren't aware of how someone felt, or betrayal that the person did not feel able to reach out to you for help. Research by the Samaritans suggests that those who have experienced a bereavement by suicide are more likely to consider taking their own life by suicide, and therefore supporting our colleagues who have experienced a bereavement by suicide is essential to their health and wellbeing.

For colleagues who have experienced a bereavement through a traumatic death (for example a murder or manslaughter), this type of bereavement can leave colleagues feeling lonely, frightened and isolated, as if no one understands their pain and grief. It is important that line managers support those bereaved by trauma in a compassionate and informed way and feel confident in signposting colleagues when necessary.

## ➔ Considerations for line managers:

- Put aside your own beliefs (particularly any relating to suicide) and listen to your colleague compassionately.
- Signpost colleagues to support services where relevant, such as their GP, Occupational Health or bespoke support services.

## In the event of a bereavement by suicide of a colleague:

- Risk assess any of the team who may also be affected by the bereavement.
- Suggest arranging a book of remembrance or a remembrance service to share stories and remember the team member who has passed.
- Offer facilitated sessions to support the team to talk through the bereavement.

# Resources

## Bereavement support

As well as in-house support options available internally through the NHS organisations that employs you, there are a number of different charities and organisations offering bereavement and suicide support, a selection of these are as below. There are also local organisations that can be accessed through the **NHS website** and guidance on practical elements of bereavement such as applying for probate, registering a death, informing DVLA, benefits, support and tax can be found on the **Government website**.

→ **Child Bereavement UK**  
Call 0800 028 8840  
Access online

→ **Cruse Bereavement Care**  
Call 0808 808 1677  
Access online

→ **Grassroots Stay Alive app**  
Access online

→ **Hospice UK**  
Access online

→ **National Bereavement Alliance**  
Access online

→ **Samaritans**  
Call 116123  
Access through their app  
Access online

→ **The Compassionate Friends**  
Call 0345 123 2304

→ **Widowed and young**  
Access online

→ **Muslim Bereavement Support Service**  
Access online

→ **Talking About Dying**  
(Christian Bereavement Support)  
Access online

→ **Jewish Bereavement Counselling Service**  
Access online

# Resources Learning

## How are you feeling NHS.

An easy-to-use resource that has been developed to enable us to talk openly and regularly about emotional health and wellbeing.

→ Access online at: <https://www.nhsemployers.org/retention-and-our-colleagues-experience/health-and-wellbeing/taking-a-targeted-approach/taking-a-targeted-approach/how-are-you-feeling-today-nhs-toolkit>

## Mind 2019: Bereavement.

Understanding grief and bereavement (including from suicide), how to manage and where to get help.

→ Access online at: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/bereavement/about-bereavement>

## Mindtools (2020).

Practical advice on leading grieving team members, including acknowledging feelings, showing empathy, avoiding giving prescriptive advice and ensuring, as far as possible, that people's workloads don't become overwhelming.

→ Access online at: <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/manage-grieving-team-member.htm>

## National Suicide Stats and Figure: Samaritans

→ Access online at: <https://www.samaritans.org/about-samaritans/research-policy/suicide-facts-and-figures/>

## Sudden Death 2020: COVID-19 bereavement.

COVID specific guidance on experienced grief and supporting yourself or someone else, particularly during social distancing.

→ Access online at: <http://www.suddendeath.org/covid-19-bereavement/help-after-covid-19-bereavement>

## Suicide Prevention

(We need to talk about suicide)

E-learning for healthcare

→ Access online at: <https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/suicide-prevention/>

## Zero Suicide Alliance

Offer face to face and online training

→ Access online at: <https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/>



# Acknowledgements

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- Director of HR & OD, Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust
- Director of Workforce, Hounslow and Richmond Community Healthcare NHS Trust
- Equality and Diversity Lead, Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust
- Equality and Inclusion Team, NHS England and NHS Improvement (National)
- Head of Equality and Inclusion and WRES Lead, Midlands Partnership NHS Foundation Trust
- Hospice UK
- Interim Director for People and Organisational Development, Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber Foundation Trust
- NHS England and NHS Improvement Midlands Region
- Regional Lead (Midlands) Chief Nursing Officer's Black & Minority Ethnic Strategic Advisory Group
- Royal College of Nursing
- Staff Experience and Engagement Team, NHS England and NHS Improvement (National)
- Strategic Lead for Equalities, Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust
- The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)
- UK Board of Healthcare Chaplaincy

To contact the **National Health and Wellbeing Team** at NHS England and NHS Improvement for advice on what mental health and wellbeing support is available to all our NHS people:

**Email:** [ournhspeople.hwb@nhs.net](mailto:ournhspeople.hwb@nhs.net)

**Online:** [www.people.nhs.uk](http://www.people.nhs.uk)

**Twitter:** [@people\\_nhs](https://twitter.com/people_nhs) [#OurNHSPeople](https://twitter.com/OurNHSPeople)