

13. WHEN CARING FINALLY ENDS

It is always a shock when someone close to you dies, even when they have been ill for a long time or have been in a residential or nursing home. As well as having to cope with all sorts of emotions, you will also have to sort out practical arrangements. If possible, try to get a relative or a friend to be with you and help you.

You will be given a Medical Certificate showing the Cause of Death and a form explaining how to register the death. This has to be done within five days.

You may have already discussed the kind of funeral wanted. If not, take time and talk to the leader of your community faith, funeral director, family or friends. For a non-religious ceremony, you can contact the **British Humanist Society**.

Information sheets can be obtained about "What to do when someone dies". You can get these from organisations such as the *Benefits Agency*, *Carers' UK*, *Age Concern*, *Help the Aged* and the *Citizens' Advice Bureau*.

After the funeral

Adjusting to not being a carer takes time. You will need to cope with all your different emotions. Loss and bereavement do affect people in different ways. Some may feel angry and resentful; others may feel guilty, depressed or quite empty. You may perhaps find it difficult to show your feelings. There is no right or wrong way, no specific length of time. You will need to find your own way and time to come to terms with your feelings and it will be an up and down journey.

You may find it helpful to talk to people who have been in similar circumstances or those who have supported you as a carer. Sometimes, it is helpful to talk to a counsellor. The

CRUSE national helpline can talk things through with you or give you details of local (and often free) bereavement support services. **Carers Careline** in Redditch can also offer bereavement support to carers in their area.

Developing a new life

Building a new life may take time. You will probably feel tired for a long while, as your body tries to catch up with the pressures you had as carer. If you are worried, chat to your GP or practice nurse.

Some people will want to start, or go back to, work. There are many schemes to help people brush up on skills or acquire new ones. Contact your local **Job Centre** or local **Education Colleges**. Alternatively, voluntary work can lead to new interests and friends. Contact your local **Volunteer Bureau**.

Over the years, carers often lose contact with their friends and it is difficult to start again. You may have to make the first move. Joining a club or group can be a way in. Think back to any interests or hobbies you had, or perhaps dreamed about doing! You can contact your library for a list of local groups.

Give yourself time and choose what is right