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Themes: Advocacy, Bereavement and Grief, Counselling

Aimed at: All People

GriefLine fast-tracks support to those affected by Coronavirus deaths

Griefline

People across Nottinghamshire who are grieving can now phone a dedicated helpline set up by Nottinghamshire Hospice for swift support in the wake of Covid-19.

GriefLine – live now and fully operational from next week – will take calls from anyone affected by grief during the pandemic. A team of trained advisers will provide a supportive ear before signposting callers to other services if appropriate. Each caller will receive a guaranteed call back within two hours.

The hospice – approached to set up the GriefLine service because of their expertise and experience in bereavement support – aims to support those who have lost family or friends due to the virus or through other causes during the pandemic. It will also support healthcare workers and care home staff who have seen large numbers of deaths over a short time span.

Nottinghamshire Hospice Chief Executive Rowena Naylor-Morrell said: “There’s an unprecedented need for support due to the volume and speed of death being experienced. This is immediate support capable of responding to intense sorrow and sadness being caused by the speed of Covid-19 deaths.

“We are in extraordinary times and we are hearing daily that people are alone and can’t find help at the immediate point following death. The deaths themselves are overwhelming, for families and loved ones and for NHS colleagues and care home staff. One care home alone reported 20 deaths last weekend.

“While support may be out there, it is disparate, uncoordinated and difficult to find in the moment of grief. GriefLine will triage and connect those who need help with those able to give it.”

People phoning the helpline will only need to make one call and will receive a call back within two hours from someone from an appropriate agency or a member of Nottinghamshire Hospice’s Bereavement and Carer Support team.

“GriefLine is a rapid in the moment service to help people in that moment of crisis. Most of those using the service will then be able to move into the natural grieving cycle without further support, but those seeking extra bereavement support will be signposted to relevant services,” Rowena added.

“Without our support, during this crisis, patients would have no alternative, the NHS is stretched to breaking point and relies on a network of providers to ensure bereavement support is in place for support and care in usual times. Our services prevent families experiencing extended mental health issues following a death.”

If there is concern that extreme grief which poses a threat to life, calls will be transferred to emergency mental health services or 111.

Dawn Tomlinson, of Nottingham, whose mother passed away in a care home last week, said: “Losing a parent is terribly sad at any time, but grieving at a time like this is especially hard. It was heart-breaking not to be able to see my mum in the days approaching her death. I was able to visit the day before for 15 minutes wearing head to toe PPE so I got a chance to hold her hand and say goodbye.”

Other family members said their goodbyes through the window, and one family member who lives abroad has not been able to travel to the UK during lockdown, so could only communicate via Facetime.

“There will be so many people feeling intense grief and other distressing emotions at the moment, so having a number to ring with a listening ear on the other end of the phone will help people,” Dawn added.

Counselling expertise

Nottinghamshire Hospice was approached to set up the helpline because of its track record in supporting families through terminal illness and death. They have compiled a directory of organisations to refer people to ranging from Age UK Silverline, the Children's Bereavement Centre to Wellness in Mind and the Samaritans. Also on the list are faith groups and the Nottinghamshire Coronavirus Community Support hub.

Mr Andrew Taylor, Consultant Trauma Orthopaedic Surgeon at Nottingham's Queens Medical Centre, said the Grief Line would be a welcome resource for members of the public and healthcare workers alike.

"A single point of contact for people to go to when they are experiencing any type of grief as a result of the pandemic will be helpful to many people who are confused about where to turn. Nottinghamshire Hospice are experienced in grief and bereavement support so are well placed to offer this service."

Mr Taylor, himself on the mend after contracting Coronavirus last month, added: "Several of our team are now seconded to the Covid-19 wards. I know they are finding it difficult. Caring for patients who are so unwell, many of whom will not survive their illness, can be extremely stressful."

GriefLine is staffed from 8am until 8pm.

Call us on 0800 111 4451 to talk to us about getting the support you need.

Area: Bassetlaw

Contact Details

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