

Cruse Bereavement Care, 2020

Coronavirus: feeling guilty

Feeling guilty is very common when someone is bereaved. The need to blame someone after a traumatic or untimely death can be very strong. No-one is perfect and sometimes blaming ourselves can be easier than blaming the person who died or others. If someone has died of coronavirus, or under circumstances affected by the pandemic this can make things worse. A bereaved person might blame themselves for infecting the person who died, or for not being able to protect them. They may feel very guilty if they were not able to be with the person and pass on any last messages, even if this was not their fault.

How you can help yourself

Coming to terms with guilt will take time and may be a difficult emotional balancing act. Talking about your feelings with someone you trust may help. Remind yourself that these are exceptional times, and you, like most people have been trying to do their best without the usual rules to help.

How you can help another person

Try to stay in contact with bereaved friends and family (even if you cannot visit in person if you or they are isolating). Let them talk about how they are feeling and about the person who has died – talking can be one of the most helpful things after someone dies. You can tell someone not to blame themselves, but be patient. Feelings cannot always be switched on and off at will and it may take a long time for someone to feel better.

How Cruse can help

- Our National Freephone Helpline remains open – call 0808 808 1677. Opening hours are Monday-Friday 9.30-5pm (excluding bank holidays), with extended hours on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, when we're open until 8pm.