



Haringey Bereavement Network

 *Mind* in Haringey



BEREAVEMENT

Bereavement is the experience of losing someone important to us. It is characterised by grief, which is the process and the range of emotions we go through as we gradually adjust to the loss.

Losing someone important to us can be emotionally devastating - whether that be a partner, family member, friend or pet. It is natural to go through a range of physical and emotional processes as we gradually come to terms with the loss. See our page on experiences of grief for information about the types of feelings that are common during the grieving process.

Bereavement affects everyone in different ways, and it's possible to experience any range of emotions. There is no right or wrong way to feel. Feelings of grief can also happen because of other types of loss or changes in circumstances, for example:

- the end of a relationship
- the loss of a job
- moving away to a new location
- a decline in the physical or mental health of someone we care about.
- The loss of a future you once imagined with the person.

ARE THERE DIFFERENT TYPES OF GRIEF?

In addition to the feelings of grief that you will experience following a loss, there are also other types of grief that you may experience at different times during bereavement.

PRIMARY LOSS

The initial loss is often referred to as the Primary Loss, and the losses that follow are identified as Secondary Losses. Primary loss is the immediate death or loss of someone or something.

SECONDARY LOSS

After any loss you may also feel what is known as 'secondary loss'. After the initial shock of losing a loved one you may struggle when thinking of future experiences that those people will not be there to share or see, such as watching your children grow up, meeting partners or attending key life events like weddings.

ANTICIPATORY GRIEF

Anticipatory grief is a sense of loss that we feel when we are expecting a death. It features many of the same symptoms as those experienced after a death has occurred, including depression, extreme sadness or concern for the dying person. It does not necessarily replace, reduce or make grief after the loss any easier or shorter, but for some people it can provide the opportunity to prepare for the loss and for what the future might look like.



FEELINGS AND THOUGHTS

Even if you know someone is going to die, it is still a shock when it actually happens, and you may have trouble believing they won't be coming back. It may take some time for you to make an emotional adjustment to the knowledge that the person has died. Grief can bring powerful and unexpected feelings and thoughts, and you may feel overwhelmed at times. It is not unusual to feel angry - anger with the person who has died, anger with the loneliness you feel, anger at the world or with your faith. Feelings of guilt and regret are common too. These feelings usually lessen over time. This is part of the usual grieving process. Grief can be very tiring, so it is important that you are gentle with yourself, and don't expect to be as organised as you usually are. You may be tempted to make big changes in your life. Most people find that this is not the best time to do so - what seems right now may not feel right in a few months.

Grief is a natural reaction

The death of someone close to you can feel bewildering and perhaps frightening.

How you feel is understandable

Most people will experience similar feelings, initial shock, disbelief, numbness, pain and confusion

Grieving takes time

Grieving is not usually a smooth process, it takes time to adjust gradually to live without the person who has died. There is no right way or wrong way to grieve.

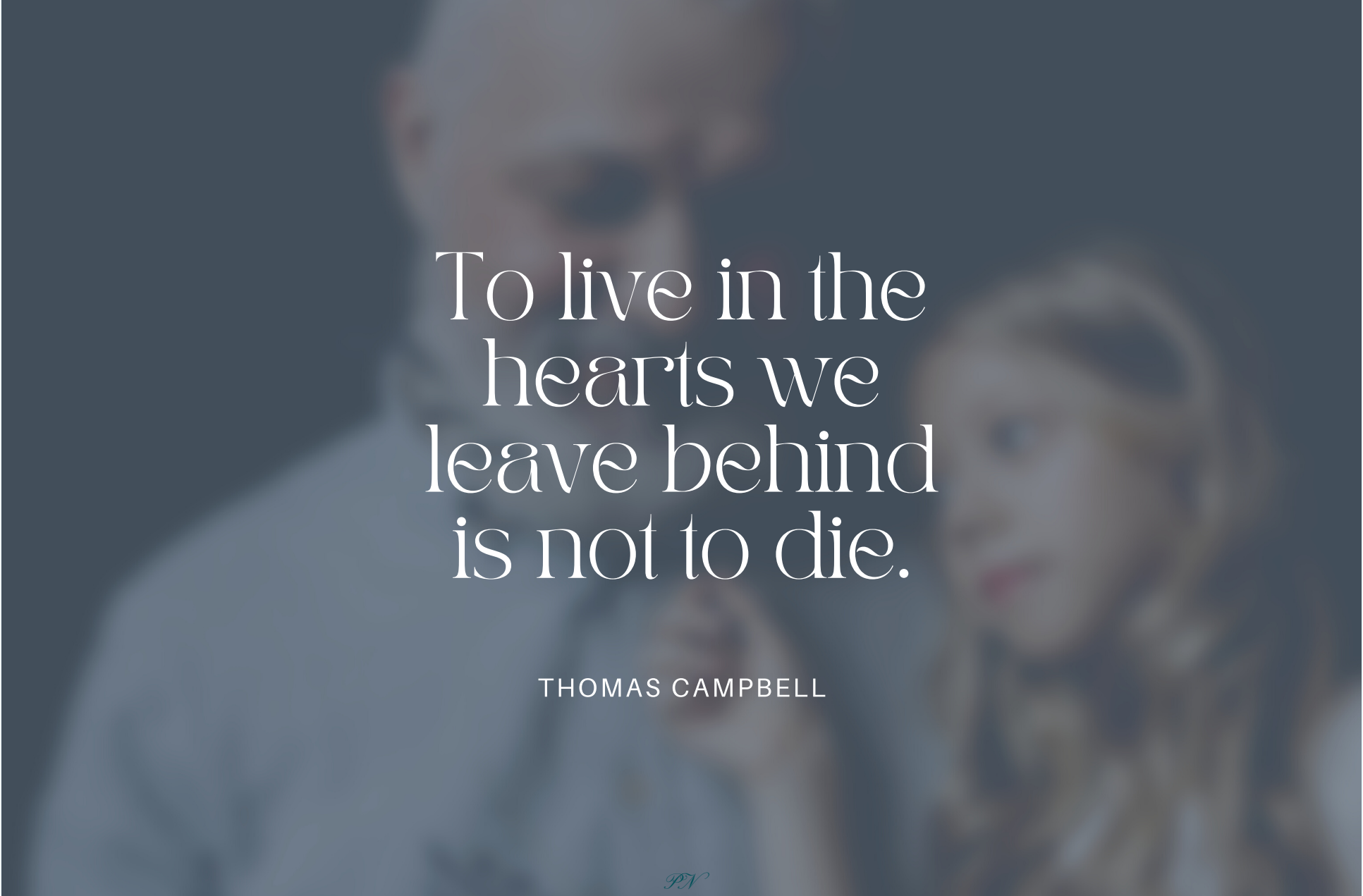
How can bereavement support help?

Loss is very personal, no two people experience loss in the same way. Many people find it helps to talk to someone who is not part of their family or friends.

How long will I need support?

We have a number of services available to you including: counselling, support groups, 1-2-1 telephone support, grief workshops & Mental health first aid 1/2 day course. We will work with you to find the support that works for you.





To live in the
hearts we
leave behind
is not to die.


THOMAS CAMPBELL

PC

WHAT DOES GRIEF FEEL LIKE?

Grief can be difficult and stressful and nearly everybody goes through it at some point in their lives. Despite this, it can be very difficult to predict how we might react to a loss, as it is a very individual process. After a loss you may experience any of the following:

- **Denial** - feelings of shock, disbelief, panic or confusion are common here. "How could this happen?", "It can't be true".
- **Anger** - blaming yourself, blaming others and hostility are all common feelings and behaviours - "Why me?", "This isn't fair", "I don't deserve this".
- **Depression** - feeling tired, hopeless, helpless, like you have lost perspective, isolated or needing to be around others - "Everything is a struggle", "What's the point?".
- **Bargaining** - feelings of guilt often accompany questions like "If only I had done more", "If I had only been...".
- **Acceptance** - acceptance does not mean that somebody likes the situation or that it is right or fair, but rather it involves acknowledging the implications of the loss and the new circumstances, and being prepared to move forward in a new direction.



These stages do not always appear in the same order for everybody, and some people experience some stages and not others. It is common to move forwards and backwards through the stages in your own way and at your own pace. Some people may experience grief outside of the cycle altogether.

LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

Look after yourself and get rest. Do try and get some fresh air or sunlight each day - even opening a window can help. If you are allowed, go for a walk or run, or do some exercise in your home. Try to keep to a regular routine of getting up, getting dressed and eating meals at the usual time, whether you are on your own or part of a family group. You may find you have days when you have more energy and the grief isn't as consuming - this is normal. Some people can feel guilty when this happens, but there is no need. It is all a normal part of grieving. Please don't feel guilty or angry with yourself.

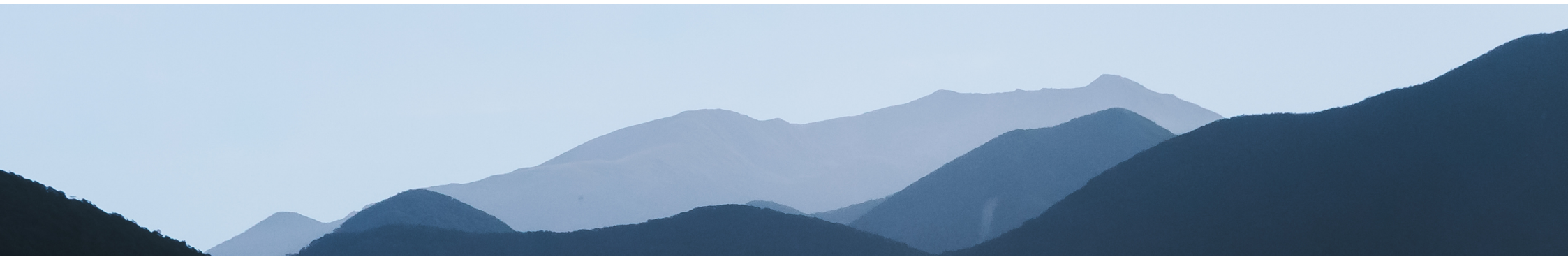
SUPPORTING A GRIEVING PERSON

Talk about the person who died. When a person dies it can feel like they are erased from people's memories. While you may fear that talking about the deceased person will just bring up painful feelings, many people actually appreciate the opportunity to talk a bit about the memory of the person, finding this a comfort and a way of integrating the memory of the person who has died into their life, rather than pushing memories away. "What's your favourite memory of [the person who has died]?" or "Tell me about a time [the person who has died] made you laugh" can be useful.

Focus on listening. Try to respect what the bereaved person is choosing to share with you and focus on listening rather than finding out more. Give the bereaved person space to open up if they want to, while also being sensitive if they would rather not take it further.

Focus on the bereaved person. Try to keep the focus on the bereaved person rather than coming back to your own feelings about the loss. Unless you have your own experience of bereavement it may not be helpful to make comparisons with your own experiences.

Help them seek additional support. Supporting someone who is bereaved can be hard work and it is worth exploring what other options for support are out there. If they are ready and interested, help them explore additional support options, such as those listed on our useful contacts page.



COPING WITH ANNIVERSARIES AND REMINDERS

There are many events that will remind you of the person who died. Some are more obvious, such as the day they died or their birthday, and others are more unpredictable, like a piece of music, a smell or a particular TV programme.

Coping with anniversaries

Anniversaries and reminders can evoke powerful memories and feelings which are distinctly personal. These days or events, which mean so much to one person, may be ordinary to others who may not understand what is happening. This can make it difficult to explain how you're feeling to your friends and family.

Just as every experience of grief is unique, so are the things that remind you of the person who died. For some people, anniversaries will remind them of fond or happy memories, while for others they can create feelings of sadness, grief, fear, regret and guilt.

Coping with birthdays after a death

After someone dies, celebrating the fact that we are a year older can feel like the very last thing we want to do. You may find that friends and relatives want to mark the occasion when you'd rather forget about it all together.

The person who died might have been the one who made plans with or for you, and you might no longer have the same options for marking the day. This can make it difficult to celebrate.

If the person who died was older than you, there may come a birthday when you overtake them in age. This can often trigger feelings of grief even if they died a long time ago.

How to cope

Plan ahead

Be flexible with others

Find ways to remember them

Put your feelings into words



FACING THE FUTURE

When you lose someone you love, life cannot be the same again, it has changed irrevocably. Things may even feel so bad that you can't see any prospect of them getting better. Grieving takes time - time to adjust to a different life without that person, and time to learn to lead a different life. Although you won't forget the person you loved, with time you can find a way of holding onto your memories of them while finding hope in the future without them.

CULTURE AND BEREAVEMENT

Many people experience grief and a sense of loss after the death of a loved one. But the ways in which they experience and express these feelings may differ across cultures. Culture is the mix of beliefs, values, behaviours, traditions, and rituals that members of a cultural group share. Each culture has its own rituals that influence the expression of grief. Carrying out these practices offers a sense of stability and security. Rituals can also help people who are dying and bring comfort to the loved ones who are preparing for their loss.



WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE?

Bereavement Support Groups

We have 3 support groups across the borough. Chestnuts Community Centre every Tuesday 10-12pm.

Mind in Haringey every Tuesday 2-4pm

Via zoom every Wednesday 11-12.30pm

(Portuguese & Spanish speaking)

The support groups offer the opportunity to share feelings, develop friendships, receive emotional support and discuss positive ideas to common grief and loss issues with other peers.

1-2-1 Telephone Support

We offer weekly sessions providing emotional support with a dedicated well-being worker

Counselling

We offer a free 10 week counselling service. We are offering this service over the phone or via online video or face to face.

Grief Workshop

Haringey Bereavement Network offers ½ day in-person workshops to support people who have lost a loved one in the borough of Haringey.

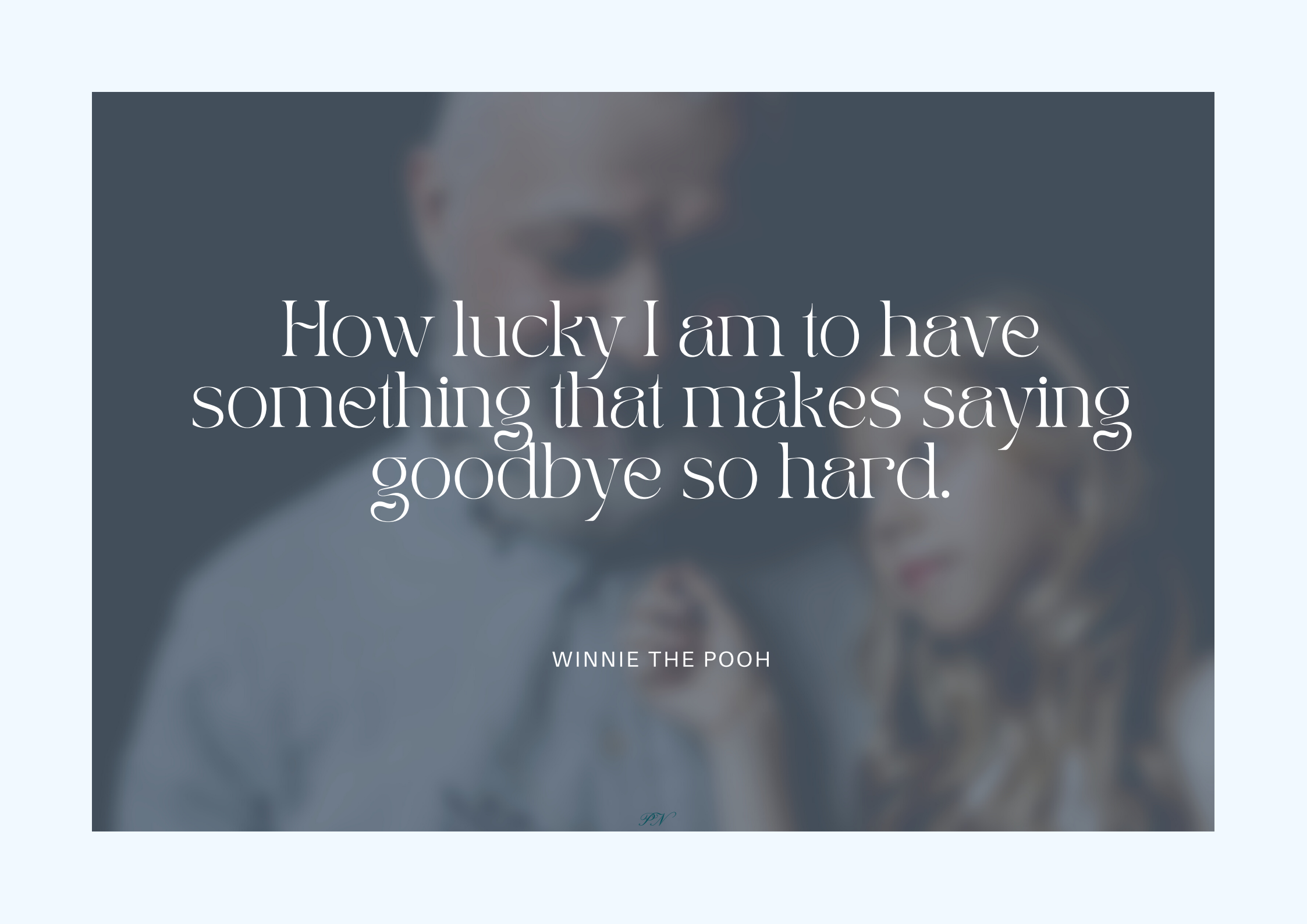
The grief support workshops are led by our Trained Facilitator which means they involve some structured content focusing on specific aspects of grief or other associated difficulties. The short sessions are aimed at helping people learn more about loss and how to cope with all that arises from it, as well as helping them make stronger connections with others in a similar situation.

1/2-day MHFA

This course will teach you to understand what mental health is, how to challenge stigma and common mental health issues.

You will have an introduction to looking after your own mental health and maintaining wellbeing. You will gain confidence to support others who may be experiencing mental health issues. To book onto this course please visit:

<https://www.mindinharingey.org.uk/product/mental-health-first-aid-training-half-day-course/>



How lucky I am to have
something that makes saying
goodbye so hard.

WINNIE THE POOH

DPV

Where can I get support?

- **Mind in Haringey** - Offers support groups, 1-2-1 telephone support, grief workshops, mental health first aid 1/2 day course and 10 week free counselling.
- **Cruse Bereavement Care** - offers face-to-face, telephone, email and online support for anyone who has experienced a loss.
- **PAPYRUS (Prevention of Young Suicide)** - Dedicated to the prevention of suicide and the promotion of positive mental health
- **BEAD (Bereaved through Alcohol and Drugs)** - provides information and support for anyone bereaved through drug or alcohol use.
- **Child Bereavement UK** - provides support for anyone who has lost a child, and for children themselves who are bereaved.
- **Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Charity (SANDS)** - provides information and support for anybody affected by the death of a baby.
- **The Compassionate Friends** - offers a range of services supporting bereaved parents and their families.
- **Sudden** - helps people who have experienced a sudden bereavement to access specialist information and advice.
- **Widowed and Young** - offers support to people under 50 who have lost a partner.

To make a referral to the bereavement network:

Online: <https://www.mindinharingey.org.uk/our-services/haringey-bereavement-network/>

email: alessandra.santos@mih.org.uk

call: 0208 340 2474