

CONCLUSION

The pain experienced in Traumatic Grief can be so extreme that those affected often need and benefit from help.

**GET HELP FOR YOURSELF: THIS CAN MAKE COPING EASIER
HELP YOURSELF, AND IN TIME YOU CAN HELP OTHERS**

Help from **PETAL** can be at the **PETAL Support Centre**, or by **Telephone**. Help can be **Individual**, for **Couples**, or for **Children** in one of our **Children's Groups**.

You can become a **Member of PETAL** and, in time, contribute to **helping others**, if you so desire.



If you want to know more about **PETAL**, or have any questions, please contact us:

PETAL SUPPORT GROUP

People Experiencing Trauma and Loss

8 Barrack Street, Hamilton, ML3 0DG
Telephone 01698 324502, Fax 01698 323724
www.petalsupport.com

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday - Thursday: 9.00am - 5.00pm, Friday: 9.00am - 4.00pm

Outwith these hours, please leave your contact details and we will return your call as soon as possible

Supported by



PETAL is supported by funding from:

**THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT • THE BIG LOTTERY
NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL • SOUTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL
CHARITABLE TRUSTS • PETAL MEMBERS FUNDRAISING EVENTS**



THE SUPPORT GROUP

for those affected by Murder and Suicide

This leaflet provides a short introduction to some aspects of

TRAUMATIC GRIEF



If you are unsure about whether you might be in Traumatic Grief, then the following may be some of the indications:

- You feel **nothing**, despite the death of someone close.
- You **sleep** badly, and may have nightmares.
- You feel life is **empty** and **pointless**.
- You burst into **tears** for no reason.
- You have sudden outbursts of **anger**.
- You are very **jumpy**.
- Your **concentration** is poor.
- Your **memory** can fail you.
- You do not want to leave your **home**.
- Your **thoughts** go round and round.
- You **cannot** get some thoughts out of your head.
- **Relationships** at home are strained.
- You feel as if you are **unreal**, acting a part.
- Your loss is physically **painful**.
- You have **flashbacks**.
- You feel no-one **understands** you.
- You feel very **tired** all the time.
- You feel you are going **mad**.



If you experience several of these signs, then you are not abnormal or going mad.

You are experiencing TRAUMATIC GRIEF

PETAL Members offer help by:

- **Listening** in confidence.
- Offering a **supportive** relationship.
- **Providing information** Advising about practical matters.
- Supporting **representations** to authorities.
- **Providing** help for children.

What others might say or do:

- You might go for medical help and be prescribed **sleeping tablets** (benzodiazepines) or **anti-depressants**. These might help, but often they do not. And changing the tablets might also be ineffective.
- People will say you will soon **get over it**. In fact, it can be months or years before you begin to really deal with your situation. And at first, things may seem to get worse rather than better.
- People treat you as a **victim**, a trauma case, a patient, but less commonly as yourself, an individual in your own right.
- You are expected to **carry on**, yet your self-confidence has sunk to almost zero. You feel you have lost all control over your life.
- People may say they know how you **feel**. But no-one knows how you really feel. Saying they do merely proves they understand nothing.

The other aspect to bear in mind that you can do things for yourself:

- Talk to the dead person, and ignore if others think this strange.
- Write down how you feel, play music, paint or draw. It does not matter how good at it you are
- Take exercise - even if you don't fancy it. Go for walks or do exercises at home.
- If you have children, talk to them and include them in your activities.
- Take things a day at a time. You will get through it - in time.

Couples and Children

After a sudden death, families can slowly fall apart. This can arise through couples not understanding each other and parents not understanding the reactions of their children. **Some points to remember include:**

- In traumatic grief, family members may retreat into their own **private** grief. However it is important they **communicate** with each other - even if they have to push themselves to do so
- Family members may grieve at different rates, and so be at different **stages** in their grief. They need to know there are such differences, and not to take them personally.
- People may express their grief in **different ways**. In particular, men and women may react differently. **Women** may prefer to talk more how they feel openly express their emotions. **Men** may suppress their feelings and bury themselves in action, such as work. The result can be that men and women, husband and wife, can misinterpret each other's behaviour.
- Children can experience grief and loss, from a quite early age. Their grief varies according to their **age** and **understanding**. Young children may not comprehend the meaning of death.
- Children may grieve for **short periods** only, as their concentration is lower than that of adults. Also their lesser socialisation can mean they talk more bluntly and ask direct **questions** about the death - which can be upsetting for adults.