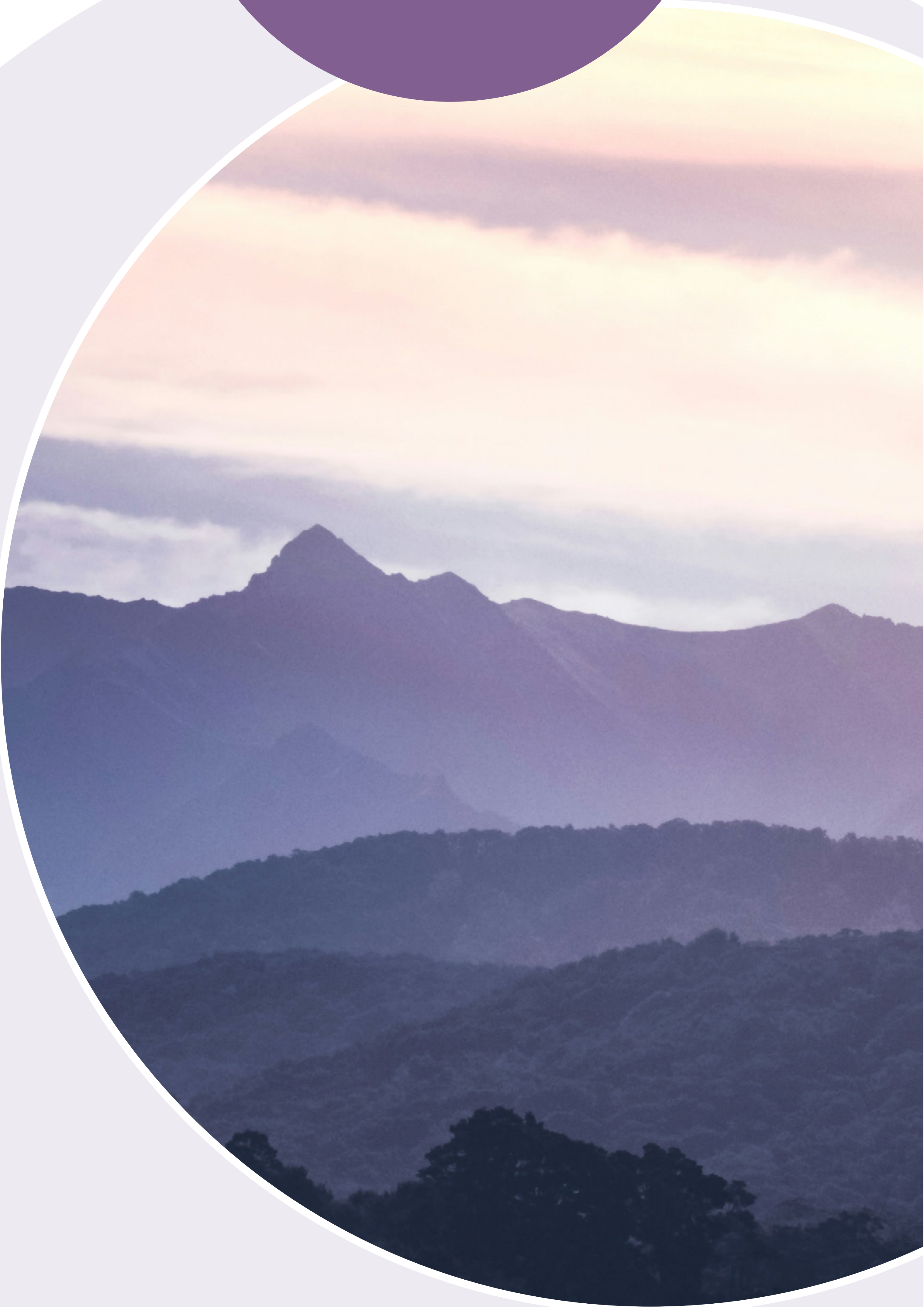


Ongoing Bereavement Support



Bereavement Support Service

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT SERVICE

The Bereavement Support Service extends the care we give to the families we serve.

Some of our families may not need this additional service, others will need and benefit from it.

Although very important, the funeral is only the first step we take in saying 'goodbye'. As you begin to work through your grief, the road ahead may seem long and lonely.

Relatives and friends will be especially helpful at the time of death and at the funeral. However, as the weeks and months pass after the death, they may not always be available to comfort you and allow you to talk about the person you love and miss so much.

UNDERSTANDING BEREAVEMENT, LOSS AND GRIEF

Bereavement is the name given to the experience we have when someone close to us dies. During the time of bereavement, we suffer all the pains of loss and grief. The time of bereavement may be months or even years and, as we are all individuals, we all grieve in different ways. The services we offer may help you and give you the opportunity to grieve naturally and not bottle up inside you the feelings you have during this time in your life.

Loss • When someone close to us dies, we lose their love, their friendship and their physical presence. To be healthy, happy people again we have to acknowledge and accept this loss. Although we do not have the physical presence of the person anymore, we do have all the memories, photos and mementos of the times, places and things we shared together. These memories may at first be painful reminders of our loss, but in time can provide comfort.

Grief • Grief is the way we express our loss, and is made up of the many different feelings we experience when someone close to us dies. Medical specialists have told us that we may experience shock, numbness, disbelief, anger, guilt, frustration, yearning, anxiety, loneliness and then hopefully a gradual acceptance. Crying, feeling sad and talking about the person who has died are the most common ways we grieve.

For many people, talking about the death helps us too. In the days and weeks after, if you want to cry, talk, or just have silent thoughts about the one you love, do so. Don't be embarrassed. It is a normal response to grief.

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

Our experienced co-ordinators are available to see anyone who is finding it difficult to cope after the death of someone they love.

Support in bereavement involves helping people accept and adjust to their loss and experience the pain of grief in an atmosphere of acceptance and understanding.

We offer a friendship in which thoughts and feelings can be expressed openly, and help people to find and use resources in the local community.

Sometimes people experience a delayed grief reaction many months or even years following a death. Grief is very complicated and takes many forms. When grief is delayed or blocked, counselling may be necessary. Some people are very frightened by strong unfamiliar feelings and believe they cannot cope. When the death of someone close develops into a crisis, the problems may seem overwhelming to both the grieving person as well as to their close friends and relatives. It is, therefore, sometimes easier to talk to an outsider about personal matters.



MUTUAL HELP GROUPS

In your grief and time of adjustment, you may prefer to talk to someone who has also suffered a similar loss. People often feel that only someone who has actually 'been through it and survived' could possibly understand how they are feeling.

For this reason we will assist people to contact mutual help groups where common thoughts and feelings can be expressed in a supportive atmosphere.

Children need to grieve, just as adults do, and their reaction to the loss of a parent or grandparent or close relative will vary from child to child.

Regular get-togethers are held by the Bereavement Support Service including *Cuppa and a Chat* and *Baby Bereavement Group*. There are specific groups for children available in our community.

Please ask if you would like more information.

READING MATERIAL

Initially you may not feel like reading, but as the weeks pass you may have doubts about how to handle certain things or events.

Many books have been written on how people cope with the death of someone they love. The Bereavement Support Service has an extensive collection of these books.

If you feel in need of some reading material, please contact us.



Ongoing Support After the Funeral

Providing the following services:

- Individual Support
- Introduction to Mutual Help Groups for Bereaved People
- Reference to Reading Material
- Community Education
- Remembrance Service

REMEMBRANCE SERVICE

Every year, before Christmas, Hope and Sons hold a Remembrance Service to which all the families we have cared for during the year are personally invited.

It focuses on a time of remembrance for your loved one. Practical advice is given on how to cope with the Christmas and holiday season.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

We have been involved in public education on grief and bereavement for many years. Talks have been given to all types of groups attached to schools, churches, kindergartens, sport and service clubs etc.

At the end of each talk, many people express gratitude for the information and knowledge they have gained. Some people say that they had doubts about attending, but were pleased that they had overcome misplaced fears and now understood a little more about a difficult subject that most people avoid.

We continue to provide speakers to community groups. In addition to this, we provide training in grief and bereavement to members of the helping professions, e.g. clergy, nurses or social workers, who often say that their training does not prepare them for the special challenges and problems which arise in their work with dying and bereaved people.

***Sharing information with others
enables us all to understand
what is happening around us,
and helps us move forward
with confidence in our
own resilience.***



Bereavement Support Service

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