



# Debbie Smith Therapy

## Chartered Counselling Psychologist

### Bereavement & loss

The main tasks of mourning are:

- \* To adjust to life without the person
- \* To let go of the person and find a place for them emotionally

What issues can counselling and therapy address?

- \* It can offer an understanding of the mourning process
- \* Help resolve areas of conflict still remaining
- \* Help to adjust

Talking about the loss can be helpful and can allow a person to adjust to their new life with all its changes, good and bad. Keeping things bottled up, or denying the sadness can prolong the pain.

Deborah can help people to acknowledge the loss and allow them to move forward. Bereavement means finding a suitable place for the lost person, to allow life to continue with adaptation and change, not forgetting or wiping out the memory.

Everyone's experience of grief and loss is unique. It is normal to feel sad and even angry when a person close to us dies or leaves. People can experience similar feelings when a relationship ends.

Mourning is a 'cycle of loss' which often includes denial, fear, loneliness, grief, anger and letting go. It is a painful process but allows us to come to terms with the loss.

Grief, although normal, can manifest itself differently in people. Some people move through its different stages almost effortlessly and others can get stuck at one stage. For these people there is the possibility of grief turning into depression as the feelings turn inwards.

Common symptoms of bereavement

- Physical pain - tightness in the body, breathlessness, lack of energy
- Confusion, hallucinations, disbelief
- Obsession with the deceased, sleeplessness, lack of appetite
- Sadness, loneliness, despair

For some, decision-making becomes difficult and concentration can be lost for long periods. Anger may be misdirected at relatives, health professionals or others directly associated with the deceased.

There may be an extended longing for the person to return and an inability to accept the loss. If the relationship was a troubled one, the conflicting emotions can make the loss even more difficult to bear and result in guilt, which is hard to shift. Talking to someone may help make sense of these difficult feelings.