



## When caring ends

The physical and mental demands of caring can be huge and there may come a time when you have to consider whether a move to residential or nursing care might be a better option than struggling to support someone at home.

For most carers, this is an extremely difficult decision which is often attended by a wide range of conflicting emotions. In particular, you may feel a sense of loss - not only of the person you have been looking after (possibly for many years) but also of your own 'identity' as a carer.

In reality, you can continue to play an important part in the life of the person that you were caring for: by visiting them regularly and perhaps even helping with aspects of their daily routine. Most residential and nursing homes will be only too pleased for you to have this sort of involvement.

The death of the person that you care for – even if expected – is likely to be an even more painful and traumatic event. As well as the grief of losing someone close there is, for many carers, the added difficulty of having to build their lives again almost from scratch. The time and effort involved in caring is often to the detriment of any sort of social life. Friends drift away and interests are put on hold leaving what can seem like a tremendous void when your caring responsibilities finally come to an end. On top of this, you are likely to feel both physically and emotionally exhausted.

Talking to close friends or family or to other people who have been bereaved may help sustain you through this most difficult period. There are also organisations – for example, **CRUSE Bereavement Care** and **The Compassionate Friends (TCF)** – where you can find plenty of practical, as well as emotional, support. If you are still finding it hard to come to terms with the loss of the person you have been caring for, however, or if your health appears to be suffering, it is probably time to seek specialist help. Your GP may be able to refer you for counselling (if this seems the most appropriate option) or you could contact the carers 'loss and bereavement' service referred to above.

## Books and publications

There are, of course, many practical issues which you may have to deal with if the person they you are looking after dies or moves into residential care. A good source of information for anyone in this position is the Carers UK guide: 'When Caring Comes to an End' which can be downloaded free of charge from the organisation's website or ordered over the telephone.

**Carers UK** 20 Great Dover Street, London SE1 4LX ☎ 0808 808 7777 📧  
[info@carersuk.org](mailto:info@carersuk.org) web link: [www.carersuk.org](http://www.carersuk.org)

Audrey Jenkinson's book 'Past Caring: the beginning of the end' takes a more personal look at carers experience of bereavement and includes positive self-help ideas for rebuilding your life again. Copies can be obtained from **CRUSE Bereavement Care** at a cost of £8.95\*.

*\*Correct at time of going to press*

## The Compassionate Friends

National Office:  
**53 North Street**  
**Bristol**  
**BS3 1EN**

Telephone: **08451 20 37 85** (09:30 to 17:00 Mon – Fri)

Helpline: **08451 23 23 04** (10:00 – 14.00 / 19:00 – 22:00 Daily)

Helpline Email: [helpline@tcf.org.uk](mailto:helpline@tcf.org.uk)

Web: [www.tcf.org.uk](http://www.tcf.org.uk)

Who is the service for: **Bereaved parents.**

Service details: **The Compassionate Friends is a national charity that provides support and understanding to parents after the death of a child or children, at any age and from any cause. Support is provided by volunteers who are themselves bereaved parents.**

- **National Helpline (always answered by a bereaved parent);**
- **Local Support (one to one and groups);**
- **Leaflets and literature;**
- **Quarterly journal;**
- **Postal library;**
- **Programme of retreats, meetings and yearly gathering;**
- **Website (includes a forum to share experiences).**

Charges / membership: **Support (initial and on-going) and leaflets are free to bereaved parents / family members. Supportive membership subscription is optional (after first year).**

Referral Method: **As above.**

Home visiting service

## Cruse Bereavement Care

Registered Office:

**Unit 0.1  
One Victoria Villas  
Richmond upon Thames  
Surrey  
TW9 2GW**

Telephone: **020 89399547**

Helpline (Adults): **0844 477 0400** (09:30 to 17:00 Mon – Fri)

Helpline (Children): **0808 808 1677** (09:30 to 17:00 Mon – Fri)

General Email: [info@cruse.org.uk](mailto:info@cruse.org.uk)

Helpline Email: [helpline@cruse.org.uk](mailto:helpline@cruse.org.uk)

Web: [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

Who is the service for: **All bereaved people.**

Service details: **Cruse Bereavement Care provides help and support to anyone affected by bereavement. The service is delivered by over 5,500 fully trained support workers.**

Charges / membership: **Free at point of delivery.**

Referral method: **Any: self, doctor, social care services, friends and family.**

Home Visiting Service

Outreach Facilities