

Overview – Bereavement & Life After Caring

When Jacqueline passed on, sadness, hurt, anger, yeah, that's all the stuff they says to expect was there, but I also took a bit of comfort out of she's now in peace.

There's no right or wrong way to feel, and it's okay to feel as if, you know, your whole world is crashing round you. It's okay to sit and cry. But, also, at the same time, it's okay to laugh and smile and enjoy the small things.

You can't take on everybody's grief because it will consume you, completely, and it got to the point where I would have said to people, "Look, here's a really good group, you know, where Cancer Focus have an excellent service for siblings and parents", and I would have started giving them information rather than taking it on-board because, while you're dealing with all of their grief, you're not dealing with your own.

Somehow like, when somebody dies, and the room could be full of about a hundred people and you'll be still lonely. When I got over the initial shock, it must have been about two months or so before I really realised that, you know, that she wasn't coming back. I set up a Facebook in her honour – it's called 'Kiss for [Alwyn]' and I found it really, really good because it helps me communicate with other people.

It was very easy after Colin died to stay at home, and even now, four years later, there are times whenever I think I want to just come in and close the door, but I try to make myself go out there. You know, what I would say is, when people ask you for a coffee, take them up on it, you know, time with friends that you had before and getting back into that normal routine and normal life.

There was a time I thought: how do you cope – two boys, you're on your own? But, very slowly, I went back to work, which was great, and then I got in touch with a few other people who had lost someone to pancreatic cancer, and from that, we then decided that we would like to meet up as a group.

I actually went to counselling, and whilst, yes, it was...it was helpful, the support group has been definitely the thing that's kept me going.

We now say that we're [actioning/action and] support. We have done fundraising. People have abseiled down the front of the Europa. I haven't. I organised it, I didn't do it, but people have abseiled. We've had the dinner-dances. We've had outings together, social outings. We've also done a lot of lobbying. From that, every Trust now has a clinical nurse-specialist.

There's a lot of people here are now, I would say, more than good friends to me. They're also on Facebook [laughing] and can be easily contacted, and if I have a problem, or if I'm feeling down or anything like that, all I have to do is send them a wee message and they'll talk to me. I would personally advise anybody that has a bereavement to get involved in a group such as the one I'm in.

It's definitely helped me to know that I'm helping somebody else as well. You know, some good has come out of my journey.

I have now re-married again and I've now got a child and it's a whole new experience to me. I've got an opportunity and I'm glad to say I got an opportunity to re-marry again, and I count myself very lucky in that I got that.

I became a widow at 38. It's not something that I signed up for. I'm now 44 and life's good. I've met a new partner, and, although Noel's very much part of our lives still, I am moving forward. I'm not "moving on" because, to me, that would mean leaving Noel behind. I'm very much taking him into my future as well. We're moving on together and life is good and, you know, don't ever feel guilty for moving on and moving forward.