

Age UK Cornwall & Isles of Scilly Bereavement Services



What is the Service?

We are excited to be launching the first component of our bereavement service in the form of a **'Beyond Bereavement'** group.

This is a group specifically for individuals who have been bereaved, with a focus around action and solutions rather than bereavement itself. Providing a safe and friendly place where people can feel supported and understood. It will provide the perfect environment for people to learn and receive support from each other, **sharing a variety of skills, experiences and knowledge** along the way.



The group will bring participants together for cooking classes and enjoying lunch together. This will be an ideal opportunity to learn new cooking skills, share cooking tips and enjoy a hearty meal amongst friends.

Our first groups were launched & piloted in **Bodmin & Newquay** and began with a welcoming Christmas lunch and a drop-in event on **Thursday 28th and Friday 29th December** respectively.

Attendance at a group will help to offer:

- A sense of belonging and feeling understood, surrounded by others who have been through a similar experience.
- A skills exchange principle that shares a myriad of talents and skills within the group, helping others who are struggling or need support.
- A link to other Age UK Cornwall and Isles of Scilly services
- The opportunity to develop I.T. skills and become linked to the wider community through our online portal, The Cornwall Link
- A renewed sense of purpose during a difficult time.

Where did the idea come from?

It became clear, when talking to people who had experienced bereavement, that there is a need for more help in this area. Not necessarily in the traditional manner that might be expected.

Individuals asked for services that help them to manage the practical issues related to bereavement, for instance; **learning basic cookery skills, D.I.Y. skills, managing bills**, jobs that used to be done solely by one partner and are quite alien to the individual left behind.

After considering a few different models on how to implement support for each different area, the most obvious solution became a **'Beyond Bereavement Group'**.

A group for people who have been bereaved but with focus away from bereavement itself. Instead, the focus will be to provide a place for people to come and **share food, conversation, and solutions** to the most common issues they face.

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Where did the idea come from....

"This social group is an opportunity to harness skills, knowledge and experience together. Each month there will be an opportunity for the group to cook and eat together improving confidence in cooking whilst creating a friendly, warm atmosphere that people can feel a part of." **Emily Downs**

How else can this service help someone?

Following a bereavement, people can lose confidence and/or motivation in social situations. It can be hard to go back to social groups that they used to enjoy due to the change of dynamics without their partner. This group could;

- Provide the stepping-stone required to help people navigate this difficult period without becoming completely isolated by their grief and anxieties.
- Be the catalyst for other new opportunities such as volunteering, physical activities, fundraising etc.
- Provide practical support from peers and specialist speakers.
- Gaining solutions through peer support can both solve the problem and reduce feelings of embarrassment and/or shame at having to ask.

What is the vision for the future?

Following our launch in February, the group will run weekly for a preliminary 6 months. For the first month a staff member (Emily Downs) will support Volunteers to run the group sessions, with a goal to be fully Volunteer led by the end of February 2018.

This service will then be **reviewed at 3 months**. Participants, volunteers and stakeholders will sit down for lunch together to discuss how the group has been going and identify how it has been beneficial; what could

be better and how is it managing in terms of sustainability. If required, goals will be set to improve the groups over the next 3 months.

Our long term goal will be to have many groups running across the County, facilitated by those who have benefitted the most. We will support each group on its own unique path forward.



What is the cost?

There will be a charge of **£4 per session** which will cover the costs of refreshments, ingredients for cooking and volunteer expenses.

Feedback

To make this service better and work for as many individuals as possible, we need your feedback!

Remember: All suggestions, comments & thoughts are welcome.

Contact **Emily Downs** or **Lee Davies**, or send your suggestions & ideas to;
email@ageukcornwall.org.uk

Be sure to check out The Cornwall Link to book and see what is happening in your area!

<http://cornwall-link.co.uk/>