**Hospice Counselling Support during the Covid-19 pandemic**

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, Hospices in Cheshire have been commissioned to provide extra support for people experiencing bereavement during this time.

This includes deaths from Covid-19 and deaths due to other causes which have been impacted by restrictions in place during the lockdown.

In line with the ongoing guidance around physical distancing, support will be provided “virtually” by Hospice counsellors

**What is counselling?**

Bereavement is a normal process and one that most people will experience at some time. For some people, the feelings of loss are overwhelming and may affect day to day life or result in the person feeling “stuck”. Counselling may be helpful in these circumstances to help people to move forward.

Counselling provides a safe and confidential space for you to talk to a trained professional about your issues and concerns. Your counsellor will help you explore your thoughts, feelings and behaviours so you can develop a better understanding of yourself and of others.

A counsellor will not give you their opinions or advice or prescribe medication. They will help you find your own solutions – whether that’s making effective changes in your life or finding ways of coping with your problems.

During a session, your therapist may take you through specific exercises designed to help with your problem, or you might have more general discussions about how you're feeling. What you talk about will vary depend on what you want help with and the therapist’s approach.

Your therapist will be impartial but understanding. They will listen to you without judgment and help you explore your thoughts and emotions. They may offer information, but they won’t tell you what you should think or do.

**How can I access support?**

You should access support at your local Hospice.

For East Cheshire (Macclesfield) and St Luke’s Hospice (Winsford), please talk to your GP or another healthcare professional about being referred for support. They can discuss with you how counselling may help and refer you for support if appropriate.

For Hospice of the Good Shepherd (Chester), you can refer yourself for support by calling 01244 853193. You do not need to involve a healthcare professional in your referral.