



WELLELDER

Ph 04 380 2440 | www.wellelder.nz | administrator@wellelder.nz

A community trust providing specialist counselling for older people from Wellington through to Kāpiti

Loss and grief affect us all as we age

Loss and grief are part of life for everyone, whatever their age. Feelings of emptiness and sadness can be overwhelming, both at the time and often at long periods after a loss.

Information Sheet # 05

Grief is a person's reaction to loss or bereavement, and grieving or mourning is the active process of coping with this. People will experience grief differently and have very different circumstances and experiences. Grief can involve a mix of emotions, and grief reactions can be emotional, physical, spiritual, social, and intellectual. All change involves elements of loss, and for older people past loss often compounds present loss.



Family change, illness or disability, accident or injury, broken friendships or love relationships, are but a few of the other losses encountered along with bereavements.

WellElder provides low cost counselling for older people

In 2017 we held 989 individual counselling sessions and ran 36 group sessions for 290 clients.

- *We rely on a DHB contract to provide the service.*
- *We ask clients to contribute towards the cost of counselling as they can, from \$10.*
- *Donations and additional funding are necessary to cover the full cost.*

When losses are unacknowledged there is often a lack of effective grieving, which can complicate later losses. Sometimes we have multiple layers of loss in older age – for instance, grieving not only for the death of a partner, but also for the loss of familiar routines, surroundings, and neighbours, and facing later changes such as moving home.

Many people are well supported in their losses by family, whānau and other community networks. Others may find it helpful to also talk with a counsellor about their grief and loss.

“Disenfranchised” losses from the past, such as miscarriages, stillbirths, infertility, sexual abuse, and death by suicide, for instance, may be particularly difficult to live with, as we age.

The counsellor’s role is to accompany a person through the grief process, rather than attempt to find solutions or “recovery”. WellElder counsellors acknowledge that each person’s grief is like their fingerprint, unique and personal to them. We encourage you to follow your own instincts as you grieve, whether this involves listening to music, laughing or crying, reading or talking, or whatever works for you.

People will experience grief differently and have very different circumstances and experiences

Grieving can be exhausting and self-care is vital. If you feel it would be helpful to talk to someone about your grief, we would welcome your call on 380 2440.

Become part of the WellElder community in Wellington.... 

Signup for information and invitations to events to support WellElder

Name: _____ Email: _____

Donate to us at 94 Riddiford Street Newtown, or by direct debit to bank account 06-0574-0223422-00 (ANZ Kilbirnie)

We are a registered charity (CC31682) – Your donations are tax deductible