

A guide to telling your story



Writing down your experiences, especially when they relate to grief, can be tricky. Where do you start?

Here are some suggestions to help you tell your story.

1. Who was the person you are writing about? Imagine sitting down with a friend who has never met this person. What would you tell them to paint a picture? Start with their name and what relationship they were to you.
2. Tell us something about their life that was important to them and to you. For example, their career, their hobbies, their hopes and dreams.
3. When did they first become ill? How did the diagnosis of their terminal illness come about and what was their reaction?
4. What happened in the period between diagnosis and death? For example, how did they cope? Were there memorable moments (happy or sad)? Did they discuss their end of life with you and others? What were their plans, hopes and fears?
5. Where were they treated and what treatments did they receive? If applicable, the name of the institution and location.
6. When and how did the person die? Was there a difference between what you/your loved one was told would happen and what actually happened?
7. Did you provide any feedback to the team/institution who were caring for the person and, if so, how did they respond?

It is helpful for any story to include these elements. However, include more information if you think it is appropriate.

If your experience was traumatic, please be aware that writing about it can be helpful but it can also bring up strong emotions. These may be directly connected and perfectly understandable (for example crying while you write) but they may also surface at unexpected moments and be difficult to reconcile (for example bursting into tears at the bus stop, or becoming angry at little things for no apparent reason).

If at any moment you struggle with these experiences, please reach out for help. Your GP can refer you to a local counsellor or you can call **Lifeline** on **13 11 14** (24 hours a day).