



## Information Sheet

### Those with ID and Grief

#### **What we understand about people with disabilities**

What we now know about people with Intellectual Disabilities is in contrast to many previously held beliefs. People with intellectual disabilities do experience grief when they lose a loved one just as much as anyone else does.

They may respond differently than you may expect by suffering the effects over a longer period of time and by having more internalized symptoms such as anxiety, depression, irritability or outward expressions of anger.

There is no evidence in current literature that suggests that people with an Intellectual Disability need to have any less information about death and dying than the average person.

#### **Supportive care**

To effectively support a person with an intellectual disability through the bereavement process you need to provide them with accurate and honest information in a format that is clear and easy to understand.

You will need to be creative and proactive about providing opportunities for them to express their grief. For individuals who may have limited or no verbal skills active expression opportunities are best such as painting, dancing or by creating a photo album.

They will need reassurance along the way as they process the difficult information.

They will need to know they are not to blame and they will need to be walked through what it will look like to and how things will be different without this person in their life.