

Are You Grieving?

Adapting to loss and managing grief



Grief and loss

Grief is a natural response to loss. People respond to loss differently. Age, gender, culture and our experiences shape how we grieve. People can experience a whole range of emotions like sadness, anger, guilt, shame and despair. Some of these feelings, can at times be overwhelming.

Some people also experience

- Anxiety and panic attacks
- Stress and depression
- Suicidal feelings
- Feelings of longing/yearning
- Loneliness
- Trouble concentrating
- Sleep problems, tiredness, fatigue
- Headaches, aches and pains
- Waves of emotional upset

Understanding grief

Mourning the loss and grieving takes time. People adjust to the loss in different ways but also at different rates. Some people adjust and develop a new sense of normal quicker than others. There is no time frame for grief. It is important to remember that people do adjust and while life may never be the same, the joy of life will return.

Top tips

- **Talk to someone you can trust**
Share your feelings and get the support and relief this can bring.
- **Express yourself**
Express your grief through a journal or blog, and sharing memories.
- **Try to keep physically active**
This will help reduce stress and tension, help you sleep and protect your health.
- **Don't try to bury it**
Grief is a healthy and necessary process.
- **Be aware of depression and social withdrawal**
Try to make an effort to do activities with others that you enjoy
- **Allow people to help you**
Let them know what they can do to help. Consider talking to a counsellor

Further help

If you continue to be weighed down by grief, it is affecting your functioning and quality of life and you cannot see a way through it, see your doctor, speak to a counsellor or consider calling one of the support services below:

Need to Talk? - phone or text 1737

Lifeline - 0800 543 354

Depression Helpline - 0800 111 757

Healthline - 0800 611 116

More on managing grief

Talk to someone you can trust

Share your feelings, thoughts and memories with positive people in your life. This will help you make sense of what you are going through and feel supported/less alone. Being able to say out loud what may be battering around inside your head may bring relief and reduce stress, and also provide a clearer perspective.

Express yourself

Express your grief through a journal or blog, singing, praying, making something to remember your loved one. Share memories with others, look at photographs, and find good memories to carry forward. Try to focus on the person, how they lived, why they are/were important to you rather than how they died or why the relationship ended.

Try to keep physically active

This will help reduce stress and tension, help you sleep and protect your health with regular exercise, good eating and sleep habits. This will help you have the energy and wellbeing to manage the tough times.

Don't try to bury it

Grief can be very hard to endure, but grieving is a healthy and necessary process. If you try to deny or bury it, it may make you physically ill, mentally and emotionally unstable, quick to anger, and result in longer term effects of depression and addictions.

Take a break from grief

Just try to do as much or as little grieving as you can manage when you can. Go easy on yourself, grieving is hard work for the body, mind and soul. Sometimes it is

good to take a break from grief and find ways to relax and distract yourself – even if it is for just a little while.

Be aware of depression and social withdrawal

Sometimes grief gets too much and people pull away from those around them. If you are continuously finding yourself burdened by a lack of motivation, feelings of hopelessness and helplessness, and a sadness that cannot lift well enough for you to go about some of your usual activities, you may be becoming depressed, and you should see your doctor. Despite the pain of loss, most people can still find some small moments of joy in their lives. Try to make an effort to do activities (alone or with others) that you enjoy so that you also experience positive emotions.

Allow people to help you

Let them know what they can do to help you or other family members. You will be able to repay the favour some time. If you or someone close to you is struggling or stuck in their grief you might want to talk to a professional counsellor or spiritual/religious advisor who can help you understand and support you with coping strategies. It can be of great benefit to talk to someone with experience and skills who understands what you are going through. Sometimes people are worried about how others might react, or judge them, so being able to talk, and express yourself in a safe non-judgemental environment can be helpful.

