



Supporting others - Dealing with grief

This newsletter includes information about sensitive and potentially triggering topics.

Five important things to know about grief

1

Grief does not have a set time frame

Grief can last for weeks, months, or years. It may come and go around holidays, anniversaries and major life events, or it might always be in the background. However, grief does tend to lessen in intensity over time.

2

Grief hurts, but it can be helpful

The process of grieving often involves sadness, loneliness, and other painful emotions. However, grieving can help you come to terms with loss and move forward in life, while still cherishing memories of your loved one.

3

The circumstances of a loss have a major impact on grief

Deaths that are unexpected, traumatic, or stigmatised (such as suicide) can complicate the grieving process. Personal factors, such as a history of mental illness, or a strained relationship with the deceased, can also contribute to difficulties.

4

Grief may contribute to other problems

Grief increases the risk of developing other health problems, mental illness, and relationship difficulties. This is especially true if the death was traumatic, if you or the bereaved person feels guilt about the death, or if grief is prolonged.

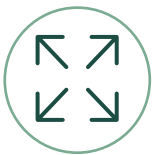
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There are no right or wrong ways to grieve

Some people cry, others don't. Feelings and thoughts can change from moment-to-moment and day-to-day. In time the intense emotional swings will lessen as you, or the bereaved person, begins to adapt to the change of living without the person who has died.

How to support someone who is grieving

It can be really difficult to talk about death and loss and it's completely normal to feel unsure of what to say when trying to support someone who is grieving. It may be that you really want to help someone but are worried about saying the 'wrong' thing or upsetting the person. Here are some of the ways you can support someone who's grieving:



Reach out and don't avoid contacting them

Staying silent or not contacting somebody after their bereavement can often make feelings of isolation and sadness worse. It can be really helpful to reach out to the person who's grieving so that they know you are there for them and available to talk and listen.



Give them space

Some people who are bereaved may feel stress or guilt if they do not, or cannot, reply to messages straight away. Let them know there is no pressure to respond but you are there for when they'd like to talk. Ask them if they'd like you to check in regularly or give them space - don't assume what they need at this time.



Consider the best way of contacting them

Receiving text messages may be easier for somebody to manage than returning calls. Dropping in to see them in person may be welcome for

some but may be an inconvenience for others. Ask the person what they'd prefer rather than making assumptions, which could be stressful for the individual.



Talk about the individual who died

While you may fear that talking about the deceased person will cause sadness and bring up painful feelings, many people find comfort in, and actually appreciate, the opportunity to talk about the memory of the person. Finding this a comfort and a way of integrating the memory of the person. Be gentle in your approach to the conversation - ask them what their favourite memory is or reflect on positive times they (or you all) had together.



Actively listen

Respect what they are choosing to share with you and focus on listening

rather than finding out more. Give them space to open up if they want to, and do not force them to talk if they do not want to take the conversation further.



Focus on the bereaved person

Whilst you may have your own experience of bereavement and feel you know how that person is feeling, try not to compare to your own feelings of loss. Focus on them and what they are voicing to you.



Help them find additional support

If they are ready and interested in getting more support, particularly if their grief has lasted a long time, help them explore additional support options. www.ataloss.org is a good place to start. They can help you find the right bereavement service and counselling support.

i When to seek professional help with grief:

One of the important aspects of this process is that there does come a time when external help may be appropriate. If there's no shift in the intensity of emotions in the first few months, it may be worth getting professional help - for example from a GP or a therapist - to discuss the way that the loss is being experienced. Sometimes people do get stuck but the right approach can help and enable.

Podcasts to help you or others on the journey through grief

Dipping into a podcast can be useful if you're looking for companionship, stories of others' experience or even advice, in your grief journey. You should be able to access the below via whichever app you use to listen to your podcasts.



Griefcast

"My goal right from the beginning was that I wanted it to be a podcast that, when it stopped, you didn't feel worse," says Cariad Lloyd, host of Griefcast, a weekly interview podcast where media personalities share stories about loved ones they've lost.



Grief Encounters

Grief Encounters is a weekly podcast series that looks at an issue that affects us all and yet remains so difficult to talk about: grief. Hosts Venetia Quick and Sasha Hamrogue hope to open up the conversation around loss and create a modern platform for people to share their own experiences, and start an open dialogue around the subject of death and all that comes with it.



The Art of Dying Well

This podcast aims to make death and dying something we can talk about openly without discomfort or fear. Presented by James Abbott, our award-winning show features James in conversation with a guest on a key topic related to the Art of Dying Well, taking in everything from being at the bedside of a dying loved one, to receiving a terminal diagnosis. Coping with grief, bereavement, death, dying, and much more are all under discussion.

