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# Coping with the Death of a Loved One

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## A LIFE EFFECTIVENESS GUIDE

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All Case Histories in this text are presented as examples only  
and any comparison which might be made with persons either  
living or dead is purely coincidental

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# Introduction

Losing someone you love can be like losing one half of yourself. The pain and emptiness felt during the grieving process can go on for months or years, however no two people will ever respond to the same situation in the same way. Working through grief is a day by day, week by week process. You may have bad days when you think you will never recover from this loss. You may also think that you will never function successfully without this person in your life. The good news is that you will recover and you will be fully functional, if you choose to.

Each and every one of us changes in some way after the death of someone we love. Some of us may harden after the experience; some will soften, but those who choose to learn and grow from this tragic time, will go on with their life remembering 'what was' and appreciating 'what is'.

Learning about grief is helpful to the grieving process. In this booklet, we will explore the common reactions of those experiencing a loss, together with looking at strategies for coping, assisting others who are grieving and facing the future.

# Common Reactions

The impact of grief can cause tremendous chaos to all aspects of our life. We all respond differently to grief but the most important thing to remember is that most reactions are normal. Sometimes we find these responses overwhelming but knowing they are normal helps us to come to terms with the changes. It is also important to note that there is no fixed timetable for these reactions. Of course if general functioning is inhibited by any or some of these responses, you should seek medical advice.

*On this page is a list of common reactions, divided into five sections. Take a moment to tick the boxes which will identify the various responses you are experiencing. Remember that not all people in this situation will experience all the reactions listed.*

## **Physical**

change in appetite

tightness in chest

headaches

Fatigue and lack of energy

Nausea, diarrhea, indigestion

General aches

## **Behavioural**

Sleeplessness

Lack of motivation

Crying (often unexpectedly)

Social withdrawal

Hyperactivity

Reckless behaviour (eg drinking)

**Emotional**

Shock, numbness, disbelief

Poor concentration

Self blame, guilt

Pre-occupation with the loss

Depression

Seeing or hearing the person

Anger

Dreams of the person who died

Anxiety, panic

**Spiritual**

Loneliness

Anger toward God

Relief or Indifference

Consolation by belief in God

Fear

Seeking meaning of loss

**Cognitive**

Examining meaning of life

Confusion

Strengthening in belief

# Stages of Grief

As complicated as it sounds, grief is a process which can be worked through. A famous psychiatrist, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross is recognised as one of the foremost authorities in the field of death and dying. Her first book, "On Death and Dying" is required reading in many universities in the schools of medicine and social sciences. Although the grieving process is very individual, Kubler-Ross found that people who are terminally ill go through similar stages before dying, and these stages are similar for those who grieve the loss of a loved one.

These five stages are not cyclical, nor is every stage common to everyone who grieves. It might be useful for you to look at the stages of grief in order to identify where you are now and where you would like to be in the future.

## **Denial**

Immediately after the death of your loved one, you may experience shock or denial. This is especially noticeable if the death is sudden or unexpected or the result of a long illness where the death was not foreseen. You may only take in small amounts of information according to what you can handle. You will wake up in the morning wanting to push away the reality of the loss and believe only what you choose to accept. This is a perfectly normal reaction except where the denial extends beyond a feasible time.

## **Anger**

When the full impact of the loss hits home, many of us feel anger. This is a result of having accepted the reality of the loss but yearnings for the loved one emerge. This anger can be directed to the deceased person for deserting or abandoning us or displaced incorrectly to others including people who offer support, doctors and hospital staff or even God. At this time there is a great need to speak about these feelings.

## **Bargaining**

Bargaining is the negotiation stage and is usually when one bargains with a higher being or God. We unconsciously or consciously say things like "if you take this pain away, I will try to get my act together".

### **Depression**

Eventually the full impact of the loss will catch up with you. Whether it is a gradual or sudden realisation, you will see that things can't be undone or changed. You will have to come to terms with the facts and those facts can be the cause of extreme sadness and depression. Depression should be carefully monitored and addressed by professionals if needed.

### **Acceptance**

The final stage is that of acceptance. Gradually, we recognise that we are becoming more interested in what is going on around us and begin to enjoy what life has to offer. True acceptance comes when functioning has returned and having acknowledged the loss in its entirety. This is achieved when you are able to look back on yesterdays with your loved one, but are able to enjoy today and look forward to tomorrow.

# Secondary Losses

Losing a loved one can bring about many unexpected changes. When the deceased is someone extremely close like a partner or family member, the loss brings with it other or secondary losses which impact on the lives of the surviving family members. The personal experience of loss should be looked at individually, as no two people will be impacted in the same way. The following list looks at secondary losses a little more closely.

Losing someone close to you can mean also losing one's **hopes and dreams**. The survivor and the deceased had planned futures together which may include dreams such as owning their home, or travelling together in their twilight years. Losing hopes and dreams can be devastating until such hopes and dreams can be replaced with others.

Quite often people **lose their faith** either temporarily or permanently after the death of a loved one. Statements like "why would God do this to me?" or "life just isn't worth living" are indicative of someone who has lost either their spiritual faith or their faith in life.

Losing a spouse or partner can feel like **losing part of self**. The individual does not feel whole as their "other half" has gone forever. The survivor feels lost as he/she learns the new roles expected and adapts to life without their partner. Wholeness can be restored over a period of time.

In cases where a family member dies, the **loss of family structure** requires painful readjustment. Not only does the family grieve the personality lost, but the role that person played within the family. Loss of a father may place financial strain on the family which could result in the mother having to undertake a working role. The loss of a mother can mean childcare becomes a challenge, and possibly additional roles for the father.



Losing a loved one can result in **social losses** including those of friendships and family relationships. Some people find relating to someone who is grieving quite difficult and therefore step back or avoid the survivor leaving the survivor to feel isolated and alone. In-laws and family members may be reminded too much of the deceased and therefore emotionally withdraw from the survivor.

# Feelings

*Feeling a loss is very individual and the above losses are examples only. Because loss is so individual, the list may be exhaustive. Now, examine for a moment what losses you feel. It is useful to take the time to identify and acknowledge these losses in order to understand your emotions and fears. Using the table below, list your losses in relation to the death of your loved one and beside each loss, try to attach a "feeling". An example is provided on the top line. Feel free to use examples from above, or identify new losses, individual to you.*

Type of Loss	This makes me feel
Loss of hopes & dreams	I feel <b>sad and depressed</b> because my future is uncertain

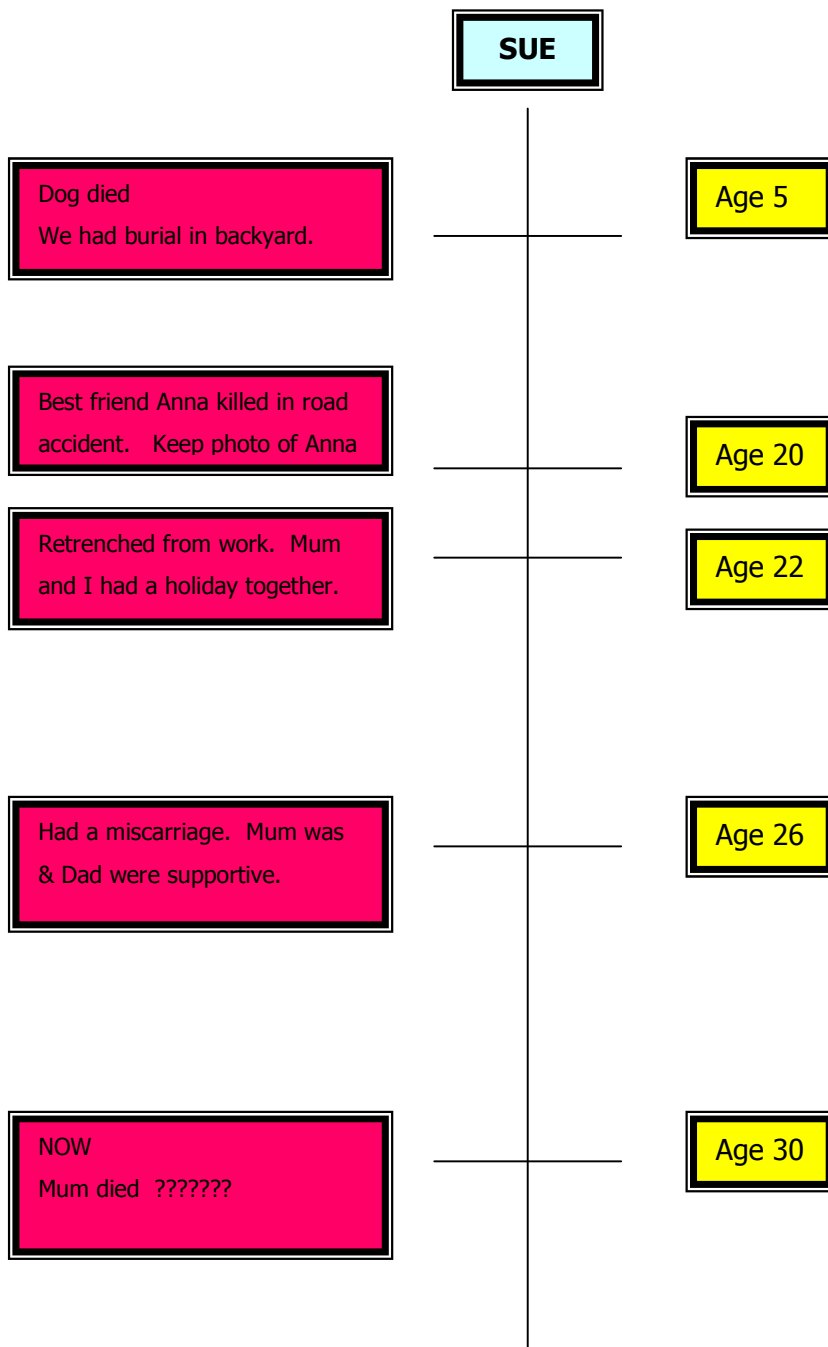
Now that you have started to reflect on your feelings, it is time to understand that these feelings are normal, and neither right or wrong. Denying your feelings is more harmful than getting to know them. If your feelings are overwhelming and you are having physical reactions when reminded of the loss, it might be best to consult your doctor.

# Prior Losses

Some of us may feel we have encountered more than our fair share of losses in life. The emotion of grief is not restricted to the reaction to the death of a relative or close friend. It can be experienced in many situations including divorce, miscarriage, severe injury, loss of a job or pet, or even when our youngest child leaves home. These experiences can compound our grieving and it is important to acknowledge them in order to understand our particular reaction to the circumstances we are faced with today.

A good way to do this is to draw a timeline of our life and the respective losses we have endured. This not only serves as a reminder of various events and people in our lives, but helps identify our various coping mechanisms. On the next page is a timeline of a 30 year old woman named Sue. Sue's timeline shows several experiences of loss beginning at the very young age of 5 when she lost her family dog. Sue goes on to describe other losses such as her job, having a miscarriage and the death of her best friend due to a road accident when she was aged 20. Now she has lost her mother, who we can see has been a major support person to Sue. If we look closely, this exercise also helps us to identify other strategies used by Sue. For example, notice the rituals Sue talks about such as burials, keeping photographs and even taking a holiday which she remembers as being helpful. Perhaps Sue will apply these very same strategies to assist her grieve the loss of her mother.

*On a large sheet of paper, draw a time line of your life. Take the time to record major events which caused you to feel pain and sorrow, or other feelings similar to those you are feeling now. Write down your age at the time of the loss, together with any details you remember about how you survived that time. This exercise will not only remind you of other events and people in your life, but you may begin to understand and remember how you got yourself through those intense periods.*



# Coping With a Loss

Whether the loss of your loved one was sudden or expected, the grief associated with the loss hurts. Sometimes we put ourselves through unnecessary pain by wishing for things like a better relationship or more time with the deceased, or the opportunity to say things we didn't say when we were with the person. This is particularly common where sudden and unexpected deaths occur. The important thing to remember is that our loved one loved us for who we are and the person we were in the relationship.

## **Journal writing**

Many people enjoy journal writing as a therapeutic and healing tool when grieving. Writing our feelings does not always come easy; however, once you start you will soon learn the benefits of getting words down and completely out of your system. Your journal can be a way of letting out your feelings throughout this sad time, or it can be used to communicate things you wished you had said to the deceased. Every time you identify feelings such as anger, fear or sadness, go to your journal and write. After each entry, your feelings will have a lesser impact on your daily life. For example, if you are feeling angry and are able to write about that anger and what made you angry in the first place, you are less likely to behave angrily toward those who do not deserve that anger.

Keeping a journal can also be suggested to children in order to help them grieve. Keep in mind that losing a loved one does not end the relationship, but changes it. For this reason, children can use their journal for all the same reasons above, but also to remember their loved one and relay messages they feel are important.

On the next page is a template of headings which are designed to help get you started with your journal writing. We suggest that you print this page and cut out the headings individually. Paste whichever headings you feel you would like to write about into your special journal and feel free to create your own.



GREAT TIMES TOGETHER



OUR PRIVATE JOKES



YOUR FUNNY WAYS



THINGS I ADMIRE ABOUT YOU



THINGS I LEARNT FROM YOU



WHAT I LOVE ABOUT YOU



THINGS YOU ANNOYED ME WITH



OUR PRIVATE SECRETS



THINGS I NEVER TOLD YOU



THINGS I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU



## **Thought stopping**

Thought stopping is a process of interrupting obsessive thoughts as a means of blocking them from one's consciousness. It works much like when a child puts their hands over their ears and sings loudly to block out what they do not want to hear. It can also act as a way of deliberately turning negative cues into positive ones. Below are three thought stopping techniques for you to practice.

### **1. Thought replacement**

When an unwanted thought enters, immediately replace the thought with a healthy, rational one.

### **2. Yelling "stop"**

When the unwanted thought enters, immediately yell "STOP". The yell can either be out loud or in the mind. Continue yelling STOP until the unwanted thought goes away.

### **3. Visual image**

If you tend to visualise negative images, replace that image with something positive and healthy.

Now let's see if this technique works for you. Allow yourself to think or see a negative thought or vision. This could be imagining your loved one in pain or emotionally depressed on hearing about their illness. Depending on whether this thought occurs visually or cognitively (thinking only), consciously replace it with an image or thought that automatically brings a smile to your face. For example, if you were to think repeatedly about this event or vision, learn to automatically replace it with a "snap-shot" of your loved one when they were in perfect health.

## **Relaxation**

Some of us find getting to sleep or relaxing extremely challenging after the loss of a loved one. However it is vitally important to take care of yourself during the grieving process. There are numerous relaxation techniques readily available from bookstores and internet sites but we will go through an easy to remember technique useful for people finding it hard to get to sleep.



1. Make sure your clothing is comfortable and lie in a straight position.
2. Tighten the muscles in your toes, and hold for a count of 10.
3. Relax your toes and enjoy the sensation of releasing the tension from them.
4. Flex the muscles in your feet, and hold for a count of 10.
5. Relax your feet.
6. Continue to flex and relax each muscle group as you move slowly up through your entire body, eg your legs, abdomen, back, arms, neck and face.
7. Breathe slowly and deeply, and sleep will come.

# Helpful Tips

So far we have identified some specific reactions to your loss, secondary and prior losses and looked at various feelings which are individual to you at this time. Don't expect these feelings to disappear overnight. Below are some helpful tips that you might like to consider:-

1. Look after yourself. You may be experiencing some physical reactions as a result of your loss such as sleep problems, losing weight or lack of concentration. Pay attention to these reactions and visit your GP if they persist.
2. Recognise that each day will be different and so will your moods. Enjoy laughter when it comes and surround yourself with people you enjoy and who make you laugh. It's OK to cry too. Sometimes people hold their emotions inside, thinking it wrong to show them outwardly. If tears don't come naturally, try encouraging them with photo albums and favourite songs.
3. Start writing a journal of your feelings and emotions. Writing is one of the most common therapeutic tools used because it helps to get rid of unwanted feelings.
4. Don't try to get through this time alone. Surround yourself with positive people and seek the support of a counsellor if required. Join support groups with others who are experiencing similar losses.
5. Do something physically active every day, even if it's just taking a short walk.
6. Don't make major life changes. Hold off making any major decisions such as moving, remarrying, changing jobs or having another child. You should give yourself time to adjust to your loss.
7. Write to your doctor, nurse or support person and tell them how helpful they were.
8. Spend time with yourself and take time to relax. Take care of your health. Maintain regular contact with your doctor and be sure to eat well.
9. Be aware of the danger of developing a dependence on alcohol or medication to deal with your grief.
10. Be patient. It can take months or even years to deal with your loss and accept the changes associated with losing your loved one.

11. Seek outside assistance when necessary. If your grief seems like it is too much to bear, seek professional assistance to help work it through. It is a sign of strength not weakness, to seek help.

# Rituals

Remember the timeline exercise we did earlier, and the various rituals that Sue adopted in order to cope with her losses. Rituals provide us with opportunities to engage in behaviours that connect us with people we love, despite their absence. They are specifically designed actions, either physical or mental, which are used individually and provide inner peace from what was causing us pain.

Certain days can be particularly painful after the death of a loved one. These include birthdays, anniversaries, Christmas, Valentine's Day and the anniversary of the death itself. Confronting these days, rather than avoiding them, is the best way to handle them.

The use of a ritual can not only acknowledge the day, but reconnect us with our loved one with fond memories and symbolic connections. When planning rituals, pay attention to particularly significant places, events and things which meant a great deal to the deceased and yourself. Below is a list of ideas for rituals which you may like to use.

- Plant a flower or tree in memory of your loved one
- Look through photo albums regularly
- Light a particular candle in memory of your loved one
- Wear an item of clothing / jewellery that your loved one bought for you
- Enjoy a meal which was your loved one's favourite
- Have lunch or dinner with friends at your loved one's favourite restaurant
- Read and re-read cards given to you by your loved one
- Read poetry which reminds you of your loved one
- Travel to places you have been to together
- Watch movies that you enjoyed together
- Toast your loved one on anniversaries and birthdays
- Play music that your loved one enjoyed
- Wear perfume that your loved one liked you to wear

- Keep a journal
- Volunteer for an organisation in memory of your loved one
- Donate money to research illness that caused the death of your loved one
- Visit the burial place
- Send balloons into the sky on the anniversary of the death of your loved one

*Take the time to review your timeline exercise which you did earlier. You might recognise particular rituals you adopted to help you cope after these events which could be useful now after the death of your loved one. On the next page, make a list of these rituals. Choose one which you would find helpful at this time, and set a goal now as to when it will be used. If you have more than one idea, make a note of them all in your journal.*

1. ....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....
2. ....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....
3. ....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

***My ritual in memory of***

.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

***This ritual will occur on***

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

# Helping Others Grieve

You may be reading this article wondering how to help someone close to you, grieve the loss of their loved one. Some people have firm beliefs about the grieving process and what should and should not be done when assisting others. Generally speaking, there are some myths about grieving which should be considered when assisting the bereaved.

**Myth: People who are grieving don't want to talk about their loss, and bringing up the name of the deceased should be avoided.**

Don't be afraid to talk about the deceased or mention his/her name as it is probable that the bereaved person will want to talk about it.

**Myth: Keep the bereaved person busy in order to avoid them thinking about the deceased.**

If the bereaved person is kept too busy, the grieving process could be delayed. They need to have a healthy balance of alone time and time with people who can support them.

**Myth: The grieving period is lasting too long and the person should be over it by now.**

The grieving process is individual to each person and dependent on many things. These may include the type of relationship with the deceased together with the level of support available to the bereaved. Other stressors in the person's life may also hinder the grieving process.

**Myth: The bereaved person appears to be OK, so I will avoid any mention of their loss when I see them.**

Some people feel very uncomfortable mentioning death or even being around people who are grieving. It is not only important to keep in contact with the bereaved, but to acknowledge the loss.

**Myth: A person who is not showing signs of grieving is probably coping well.**

Sometimes people avoid grieving publicly because they believe they have to be brave for the sake of others. By holding back their emotions, they are more than likely delaying the grieving process which can be unhealthy for their eventual recovery.

Many of us find talking to someone who is grieving, extremely difficult. It may be so difficult we decide to avoid the bereaved person for a period of time. Here is a list of helpful tips to remember.

- **DO** use the deceased person's name
- **DO** talk about the deceased person. Keep memories alive by looking at photos, recognizing anniversaries and commemorating the person.
- **DO** share your feelings with the bereaved. Be honest about your fears of saying the wrong thing, but be there anyway.
- **DO** provide opportunities for the bereaved to express their feelings.
- **DO** be patient with the bereaved.
- **DON'T** use euphemisms like 'passed away'.
- **DON'T** say things like "you must be brave" – people don't have to be brave, they should be allowed to express their emotions.
- **DON'T** say "you should be better by now". There is no timetable for grief.



# Helping Children Grieve

You may not be grieving for your loved one alone. You may have a small child or children who are grieving, and along with your own grief, you need to be supportive and understanding of their reactions to the death of their special someone. The following section is for parents of children who are grieving.

Children, like adults, experience grief in many different ways and each child has his or her own pace of recovery. It is impossible to predict how a child will respond to losing a loved one; however there are certain reactions that are common to children as well as adults. For example, whilst an adult may express anger verbally, a child may do so through drawing pictures. Children also grieve irregularly – one minute they are crying loudly and the next they are happy outside playing with friends. Understanding the concept of loss depends on the age of the child and below is a table of how children grieve at different ages. Keep in mind that other factors play a part in a child's grieving, for example, intelligence, family environment and previous experience with death.

## **The Young Infant (Age 0-3)**

### **Thoughts:**

Children at this age have little or no understanding of death and tend to think that it is temporary and that the person who has died will eventually return.

### **Feelings:**

Young infants can sense that something is wrong as they experience the grief of their primary caretaker. Responses may include feelings of being left behind, fear and insecurity.

### **Reactions:**

Anger, crying, searching, lack of appetite and finally quiet resignation is the way in which a child will grieve.

### **Ways to help cope:**

What we do is far more important than what we say to a child this age. Generally, a grieving infant needs large doses of tender, loving care ... holding, cuddling and stroking.

### **The Older Infant (Age 3-5)**

#### **Thoughts:**

The older infant has a limited understanding of death depending on the information that is provided.

#### **Feelings:**

Because the preschooler has not yet developed a clear understanding of the permanence of death, their feelings may include confusion, anger and aggression.

#### **Reactions:**

Regression in behaviours such as sleeping and toilet training may occur together with reverting to baby behaviour and clinging.

#### **Ways to help cope:**

When talking about death to the preschooler, it should be explained simply to avoid confusion. Role playing with animals, toys and puppets can help the child gain an understanding of the loss.

### **Age 5 – 8**

#### **Thoughts:**

Slightly older children have a greater understanding of death, recognising that it is irreversible.

#### **Feelings:**

They can find it difficult to understand their emotional reactions such as feelings of guilt or fear. If the child has lost a parent, he/she can feel anger towards the surviving parent or even the parent who deserted them.

#### **Reactions:**

Behavioural problems such as underperformance at school and disruptions in friendships may occur as a result of the loss.

#### **Ways to help cope:**

Children's artwork can speak louder than words and free expression can be encouraged by taking this approach.

## **Age 8 – 12**

### **Thoughts:**

Children aged from around 8 years and older have a more realistic understanding about death and the implications of permanent separation.

### **Feelings:**

They tend to react with similar emotions to adults such as extreme sadness and anger.

### **Reactions:**

The death of a loved one at this age is quite traumatic. Some of their questions may indicate fears of their own death.

### **Ways to help cope:**

Children of this age not only need support and comfort but can also be a source of comfort for others. Opportunities to be helpful to others during the crisis can actually help children deal with their own feelings.

## **Adolescents**

### **Thoughts:**

To the emotionally healthy teenager, death is foreign and is something they do not want to think about.

### **Feelings:**

When losing an important relationship, the adolescent's self centred values may cause them great distress, anxiety and fear. Adolescents have the capacity for empathy with other family members, so their pain is doubled.

### **Reactions:**

Sometimes self destructive behaviour such as alcohol or drug abuse is experimented with as a means of deferring the pain attached to the loss.

### **Ways to help cope:**

Caretakers of a grieving adolescent should not be discouraged if their teenager reaches out to someone other than family. It is also not uncommon for him/her to take on the role of parent to younger siblings.

# Gender Differences

Men and women often grieve differently. Whilst this section may prove helpful in understanding the gender differences, it is important not to stereotype our views and recognise the uniqueness of each grieving individual.

Unfortunately, many young boys are taught to be “strong” and to hide their emotions. Society has placed huge expectations on the roles of men who learn in childhood things like “big boys don’t cry”, “stand up and take it like a man”, and “you are the man of the house”. It is therefore difficult for men to ask for support and even harder to accept it. With the loss of a loved one, men are often silent and less expressive. Men tend to *think* their way through grief, rather than *feel*. Typically then, society has an expectation that men will grieve in the following ways –

- Be emotionally strong
- Don’t cry
- Don’t ask for assistance
- Be non-expressive
- Shake hands, don’t hug
- Don’t talk about it

Women are taught at an early age to nurture and express emotions. Young girls are surrounded by toys which teach them to care for, talk to and love, such as dolls and teddy bears as opposed to trucks and racing car sets which focus on speed, fixing and building. With the loss of a loved one, a woman therefore freely talks about the loss, seeks out assistance such as joining support groups and therapists and freely visits the burial place and reflects on the loved one. Society therefore also has an expectation that women will –

- Cry openly
- Talk about feelings
- Ask for assistance

- Fall apart and rely on others

Both men and women need permission to grieve in a safe and non judgemental environment in order to cope with their loss and its respective effects on their lives. Because some people choose not to talk about their feelings does not mean they don't have feelings, but instead may not have the words to express their feelings.

By acknowledging that we all grieve differently we can assist men to cope with loss and pain in their own individual way. Grieving men need to be given permission to feel their pain, express their emotions and to seek assistance.

# Abnormal Grief

Sometimes, the normal mourning process can turn to complicated or abnormal grieving for a number of reasons. These can include the circumstances of the death, the person's history of grieving experiences, and the personality of the bereaved and the availability of support.

We discussed earlier the more common reactions experienced in grief, but in order to identify abnormal grief, we can categorise complicated grief reactions into four headings.

## **1. Chronic grief reactions**

Grief can become chronic in cases where the bereaved no longer believes they have an identity without the deceased. They feel that they cannot function alone. Chronic grief is the most common form of abnormal grief and typically affects people who have lost their long time partner.

## **2. Delayed grief**

This type of abnormal grief can occur unexpectedly some time after the death of the loved one. The bereaved appears to function well immediately after the death, but is really delaying the grief due to other life stressors, including supporting others and arranging funerals. The grief occurs at a later date in response to another loss or as a reminder of the loss.

## **3. Exaggerated grief**

Exaggerated grief is where the bereaved person is so overwhelmed by the death of their loved one, that they develop major psychiatric disorders such as phobias and disabling helplessness.

#### **4. Masked grief reactions**

When the bereaved experiences physical symptoms that do not at first appear to be related to the loss, it can be a masked grief reaction. This type of abnormal grief is thought to occur when normal grief cannot be openly expressed because of cultural or societal factors.

# Moving Forward

Together we have looked at your individual reactions and feelings after the death of your loved one. We have then explored ways of coping which range from relaxation techniques to journal writing and rituals. After that we have learnt how to assist those who are grieving including the different developmental ages of children. And lastly, we have identified abnormal grief reactions in order to identify when our grief goes beyond what is considered normal.

Many people find that after recovering from the loss of a loved one, they have a desire to help others. This can be achieved by doing volunteer work or assisting charities in the area of illness that affected your loved one. Others find that they move forward by setting small goals such as going for a walk and taking up a craft or hobby.

There are no short cuts to working through grief. It is a difficult process which is individual to each of us. We need to work through grief in our own time, and deal with the loss of our loved one in healthy and not destructive ways. If you or someone in your family needs support, get it. Grief can be a very lonely journey if travelling it alone.

One thing to remember after losing a loved one is that death does not end the relationship. It is important to recognise the ways that he or she is still with you and honour these connections as you move forward to full recovery.

As you look to the future, decide on new goals, hopes and dreams. Choose to embark on your journey of life with renewed passion as a result of having known your special person. Your life may never be the same now that he or she is gone, but you are an infinitely better person for having known them and richer for having been loved by them.



*To complete this reading, there is one final exercise to assist you with your recovery. Please take the time to complete the questions on the next page. Your answers will help you to realise that your loved one lives on.*

What things did your loved one teach you about love?

.....  
.....  
.....

What things did your loved one teach you about life?

.....  
.....  
.....

What did your loved one teach you that is important to pass on to others?

.....  
.....  
.....

How have you grown from knowing and loving your loved one?

.....  
.....  
.....

How are you different from knowing and loving your loved one?

.....  
.....  
.....

## Further Reading

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## Support Agencies

Lifeline (24 hours)

☎ 13 11 14

<http://www.lifeline.org.au/>

Centacare

☎ 3252 4371

<http://www.centacare.org.au/>

Relationships Australia

☎ 1300 364 277

<http://www.relationships.com.au/>