

Loss and Grief

EMPLOYEE
ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM

Resilience
Empowerment
Compassion



What is Grief?

Grief is a normal reaction to a physical and/or emotional loss. Grieving is a process involving thoughts and behaviours as a person adapts to their loss.

Some Facts About Grief

- Grief is a natural response to loss.
- Everyone's grief is unique and can be unpredictable.
- A person's response to loss is strongly influenced by their cultural background.
- Acknowledging and talking about your feelings, thoughts and behaviours can help.
- The process of grieving takes time and can include stages such as shock, denial, anger, bargaining and acceptance.
- Society's response to grief can seem inconsistent with the individual grieving process, for example "get over it."

Managing Your Grief

Following are some suggestions to help you manage the grief in your life:

- Take good care of yourself. Eat well and get plenty of rest.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs.
- Surround yourself with support. Spend time with your spouse, children, parents, colleagues, friends and neighbours.
- Seek professional help.

Providing Support

Following are some things to consider as you support someone you know who is grieving.

- Remember that grief is not a rational process, it is emotional, heartfelt and personal. Avoid comments and clichés such as "I know exactly how you feel.", "Time heals all wounds.", "Your loved one is in a better place." or "Try not to cry."
- Attend the memorial service, as appropriate.
- Take time to offer condolences and support to the person and their family.

- Knowing what to say at such a difficult time is hard for everyone. A few genuine words are best. "I'm sorry for your loss.", "Let me know if I can help you in any way.", and don't be afraid to simply say "I don't know what to say."
- Grieving a loss takes time, support is continuous and requires confidentiality, understanding, patience and flexibility.
- Respect the person and their unique grieving process. Avoid gossip.

We Can Help.

The Employee Assistance Program can:

- assist people manage their grief
- provide support during the grieving process
- help people identify and work through the stages of their grief
- provide information on the grieving process

Resources

Suggested Reading

- The Treatment of Complicated Mourning. T. Rando

- Men don't cry. Women do: Transcending Gender Stereotypes of Grief. T. Martin & K. Docka
- On Life after Death. Elizabeth Kubler Ross
- Facing Death and Finding Hope. Christine Longaker
- How to Survive the Loss of a Love. Peter McWilliam

Organizations and Websites

- Compassionate Friends: 204-787-4896
- Hospice and Palliative Care Manitoba: 204-889-8525
- Association for Death Education and Counselling: 204-477-8188
- Grief Net: www.griefnet.org
- Grief recovery: www.griefrecovery.com

Employee Assistance Program

3rd Floor – 55 Donald Street
Winnipeg, MB R3C 1L8
Telephone: 204-945-5786
Toll Free: 1-866-669-4916
Fax: 204-948-2298
TTY: 204-948-3401