

What if you feel you are not coping?

You are more likely to have a difficult grieving process in some circumstances.

- If you are on your own and have no support
- You have unresolved issues with the person who died
- The death is in difficult circumstances such as a national disaster or murder
- The person goes missing or it is not clear what happened, or there is no funeral.

Other circumstances surrounding a death may also make it difficult to grieve.

- A sudden or unexpected death
- The death of a parent when you yourself are a child or adolescent
- Miscarriage or death of a baby
- Death due to suicide
- The death of a co-habiting partner, same sex partner or extra-marital relationship, where the relationship may not be legally recognized or accepted by family and friends
- Deaths where the bereaved may be responsible
- Where a post mortem or inquest is required
- An accident or more than one death at once
- The death of an absent or estranged parent or sibling

Bereavement is one of the most difficult things we face in life. If your feelings of depression are worsening it is useful to speak to your GP. Counselling and Psychotherapy can also help. Talk to Amian for more information about what is available near you.

Children and bereavement.

Children are aware when a loved one dies and they feel the loss in much the same way as adults. Although children go through similar stages of grief they may progress through them more quickly. Understandably some people try to protect children from the death and the grieving process. It is probably better to be honest with children about your own grief and encourage them to talk about their own grief and pain.

Helping family and friends.

If someone in your family or a friend has been bereaved, the best thing you can do is spend time with them and listen to them work through their grief. Offer practical help, such as cooking dinner or shopping for food. When a person is grieving it's often hard to focus on everyday tasks. You may feel awkward because you don't know what to say. Just being there will help and let them know you care.



Amian offers a 24/7 helpline. Our service is free and confidential to all staff.

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DEALING WITH BEREAVEMENT



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BEREAVEMENT

Bereavement describes the sense of grief and loss we experience when someone close to us dies. We go through a period of mourning—numbness, anger and sadness can all be a part of this. Bereavement can also cause us to experience physical symptoms including sleeplessness, loss of energy and loss of appetite.

When someone is bereaved they usually experience an intense feeling of sorrow called grief. People grieve in order to accept a deep loss and to carry on with life without the person who has passed away. Experts believe that if you don't grieve at the time of death or shortly afterwards the grief may be bottled up inside of you. This can lead to emotional problems and even physical illness later on. Working through your grief can be a painful process, but it is often necessary to ensure your future emotional and physical wellbeing.

The Stages of Grief

There is no single way to grieve. Everyone is different and cultural and family history will have an impact. Some stages of grief are however commonly experienced



There is no set timescales for reaching these stages, but it can help to know what the stages are and the intense and swift changes in mood you may be experiencing are normal.

Feeling emotionally numb is often the first reaction to a loss. This may last for a few hours, days or longer. The numbness may help deal with the practical arrangements but if this goes on for too long it can become a problem.

Numbness maybe replaced by a deep yearning for the person that has died, or you may think you see them in a crowd.

You may feel agitated or angry and find it difficult to eat, sleep or relax. You may also feel guilty, dwelling on arguments you had or things you wished you had said.

This period of strong emotion usually gives way to bouts of intense sadness, silence and withdrawal from family and friends. During this time you may be prone to sudden outbursts of tears, set off by reminders of the person who has passed away.

Over time, the pain, sadness and depression start to lessen. You begin to see life in a more positive light again. It is important to acknowledge that

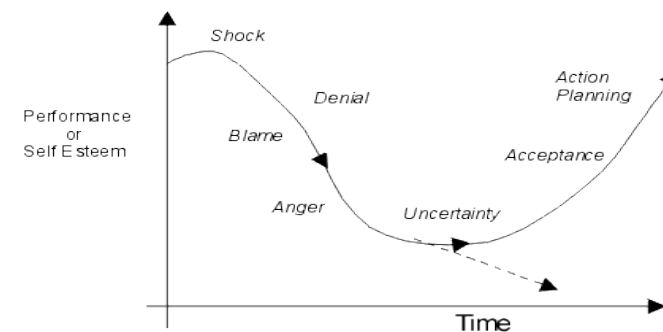
there may always be a feeling of loss but you learn to live with that.

The final phrase of grieving is to let go of the person who had died and carry on with your life, though of course it wont be the same as before. Your sleeping patterns and energy begin to return to normal.

How Long does the grieving process take?

This varies from person to person and your situation. It can often take one to two years to recover from a major bereavement. There are however many things you can do during this time to help yourself. Try to express your feelings, whether they be guilt, anger or sadness. Accept that some things, like death, are beyond your control. Avoid making major decisions—your judgment may be affected and changes could increase your stress levels.

Give yourself time and space to grieve properly,



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