

# Dealing with Grief



## Grief

Grief is our normal, natural and inevitable response to loss, and it can affect every part of our life, including our thoughts, behaviours, beliefs, feelings, physical health and our relationships with others. With the support of family and friends, many people adapt to loss well and may not experience intense and persistent feelings; however, for some, the experience of grief can be overwhelming and further support may be helpful. ***If you do require support, book in to speak to one of our counsellors to assist.***

Grief doesn't come in neat, consecutive stages. In fact, there's not much about grief that's neat at all. It comes in waves, sometimes so strong that you think you're drowning in emotions. They may be scary, unfamiliar, keep you awake and stop you from eating. Many people worry and think they're going crazy. Don't expect it to be a smooth road, it just isn't.

## Grief is an individual experience

Everyone grieves in their own way. Your grief is unique to you, and as long as you are not causing harm to yourself or those around you, there are no 'right' or 'wrong' ways to grieve. We do not always know how people are grieving simply by what we see. Some people are open and expressive with their grief, crying, and wanting to talk, whilst others are more private, may be reluctant to talk and prefer to keep busy. Other factors, such as culture, gender and belief systems can also influence the ways that people grieve. Culture in particular can affect the way we experience and express grief, each culture has its own set of beliefs and rituals for death and bereavement. Sometimes the expression of grief may be at odds with someone's culture, it is important for each person to grieve in ways that feel right for them. Grief is individual and personal, and it's important to respect each other's way of grieving, even if we don't necessarily understand it.

## Tips for dealing with grief

**Look after yourself.** It's important to look after things like sleep, exercise and eating. You may not feel like it but these things can help improve how you think and feel.

**Accept your feelings.** It's okay to feel sad about losing someone and to take time to cope. It's perfectly normal to experience strong emotions

**Take time out.** Being around others can sometimes be overwhelming so take some time to do something you enjoy.

**Allow yourself to express your thoughts and feelings privately.** Write a letter or a poem, draw, collect photos, cry etc.

**Allow yourself to feel happy and to move on with your life without feeling guilty.** People sometimes feel bad if they let themselves smile or if they seem to be moving on. It doesn't mean that you have forgotten the person you have lost – they would have wanted good things in your life.