

Life Following Loss

Responding to Grief

When someone close to you dies, grief is a normal response to loss. Grief is unique to each person and may include the following responses:

- Sadness, crying, shakiness
- Numbness, shock, feeling overwhelmed
- Anxiety, knot in the stomach, tightness in the throat, chest pain
- Restlessness, confusion
- Loss of energy, fatigue
- Changes to appetite and sleep patterns
- Helplessness, hopelessness
- Anger, irritability
- Loneliness, social isolation, fear
- Anxiety, guilt, regret
- Relief that suffering has ended,
- Trying to find meaning and rethinking religious or spiritual beliefs

Caring for yourself

- Be patient and understanding with yourself, allowing yourself the time you need to mourn. Do not feel pressured by others to speed up the process.
- Treasure your memories and embrace your belief system.
- Take time to feel the multitude of emotions as you reflect on your loss. You may find it helpful to write your thoughts and feelings in a journal.



- Take care of your physical health and wellbeing. Be understanding of your own physical and emotional limits
- Develop or establish a support system. Talk about your grief with others.
- Try to resume your favourite activities as soon as possible.

When to seek help

- If you are experiencing physical symptoms or a long period of intense emotion, make an appointment to speak with your family doctor or family health team.
- If you are experiencing suicidal thoughts, self-destructive ideas, or if you are worried about your response to grief, contact your family doctor, family health team, or a mental health counsellor.

- For immediate access to addictions, mental health and crisis services call **Here 24/7: 844-437-3247**.
- If you are experiencing multiple losses or trauma, seek help from your family doctor, family health team or a mental health counsellor.
- **Call 211** or visit **www.211ontario.ca** to find programs and services in your community.
- **Call 1-833-515-1234** or visit **www.healthline.ca** to connect to local health and community services.
- **Visit www.caredove.com/wwihpc** for information about grief counselling and support groups.



Contact Information

If you have any questions regarding this service, please contact: **1-833-515-1234** • ontariohealthathome.ca



Helping children and youth with loss

- Children experiencing loss and death in different ways as they grow. Consider your child's age and development when you help them deal with a loss.
- Use simple and clear words to tell your child that someone has died. Answer their questions honestly.
- Help your child to feel safe and express their own feelings. Also acknowledge your own grief. Children will learn how to respond and develop coping skills by watching adults.
- Each child will have a different reaction to the loss of a loved one. Be aware of changes in behaviour, daily activities and relationships. If you are concerned, make an appointment to speak with your family doctor or family health team.