

GRIEF AND LOSS



WHAT IS GRIEF?



Grief is a natural response to the death/loss of someone/ or a pet who is important to us. We can also experience grief or a sense of loss when we have a significant change in our lives. E.g., parents separating/divorce, change of school.

By the age of 16 years old, most children and young people have experienced losing a loved one in death. (Childhood Bereavement Network, 2021).

WHAT MIGHT I FEEL OR EXPERIENCE?

Feelings and Experiences are different to each person. How we feel might depend on what the person/pet who has died meant to us.

- Sadness
- Anxiety and Worry
- Loneliness
- Anger
- Guilt and Blame
- Confused
- Hurt or pain
- Numb



WHEN WILL I FEEL BETTER?

Grief has no time limit; we will always miss the people/pet who has died but over time the pain and sadness become easier to manage.

“Just like it rains when the clouds can no longer handle the weight, we cry because our heart can no longer handle the pain.”

– Unknown.



PHYSICAL SIGNS DURING BEREAVEMENT



Difficulty Sleeping



Tired/Lack of Energy



Tightness in Chest



Feeling Sick or Poorly



Changes in Eating Habits



Aches or Pains

The signs listed are just a small example. Everyone will be different in how they grieve and show physical signs of grief and loss.

THE GRIEVING PROCESS

There is no right or wrong way to grieve after someone has died. Everyone will be different; you may be able to talk and show your emotions soon after a loss or prefer to take things slow and process your feelings in your own time.

It is OK to not be OK!

Try to be honest about how you feel both to yourself as well as other people. Often people say “I’m fine” even when they are not fine, when people ask how they are.

WHAT CAN HELP US FEEL BETTER?

1. UNDERSTANDING GRIEF

How we feel after the death/ loss of someone, or a pet can change over time. Understanding how it might affect your life can help you after a loss. If you are not sure what happened to person/pet, asking some questions about situation might help rather than wondering/worrying about what happened. This can help to understand how we feel.

2. AWARENESS OF YOUR EMOTIONS

Learning to become aware of how you feel about a loss can help. Sharing how you feel with someone you trust can support you to accept how you feel and feel less on your own. Allowing yourself to feel your emotions can help you to cope with grief.

3. TIME AND SPACE

Take time for yourself and find a space where you feel safe and comfortable. Although you might need some time on your own, it is important not to spend too much time alone as this can make feelings of grief stronger e.g., feeling lonelier/more pain and not wanting to talk.

4. SUPPORT NETWORK

Speak to people you trust and feel comfortable with. We are sure they would want to listen and support you. It could be particularly helpful to talk to other CYP who have gone through similar experiences. This might be people you know or a CYP support group.

5. REMEMBERING

Finding a way to remember the person/pet who died can help. E.g. keeping their photos on wall, creating a memory box with photos/pictures, talking about person/pet with someone, writing about person/pet, drawing a picture, writing a message to them, listening to music they liked, doing something to remember person on special occasions, e.g., bake their favourite cake.

6. SUPPORT AT SCHOOL

Ask for help/support at school if you need it, this might be support to talk about how you are or help if concentrating on/doing schoolwork is difficult. If bereavement is recent, you may need some time off school.

SELF-CARE



Looking after yourself is very important. It is all about taking time out to do things that help you feel better.

The emotional and physical impact of grief and loss can leave us feeling tired and worn out. Taking care of yourself mentally and physically can help. By spending some time doing something you enjoy can help focus your mind on emotions other than those related to grief/loss. This can help give you more energy and balance your emotions.

Some examples could be:

- Getting enough sleep
- Regular/familiar routines
- Exercise/ get outdoors play football, netball etc.
- Relaxing/Meditation/Mindfulness
- Spending time with friends/family
- Listening to a Podcast or Music
- Time to play/have fun!
- Sketching, Painting
- Writing/ Reading a Book



CAN YOU THINK OF ANYMORE?

MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Do you find it hard to express how you are feeling? Why not use an emoji to share how you are feeling today?



I feel great!



I feel good.



I feel sort of ok.



I am having a hard time.



I am beginning to struggle.



I need support.



COPING WITH GRIEF

Below are some exercises and techniques to help you through grief, loss, and change.

GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

Take your time to clear your mind and step by step, slowly focus on the list below.

FIVE things you can SEE

FOUR things you can FEEL

THREE things you can HEAR

TWO things you can SMELL

ONE good thing about YOU!



5 FINGER BREATHING EXERCISE

1. Stretch one hand out, creating space between your fingers.
2. Hold up your pointer finger on the other hand.
3. Start at the bottom of your thumb. Use your pointer finger to trace up your thumb as you slowly breathe in through your nose.
4. When you get to the top of your thumb slowly breathe out your mouth as you trace down the other side.
5. Repeat for all fingers until you have traced your whole hand.



REMEMBERING....

Sometimes looking back on happy memories can bring us some comfort and peace.



LOOKING FOR MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES?

Below we have listed some great links to various National Bereavement services who have banks of information, videos, and other resources to help Children and Young People experiencing grief.

Child Bereavement UK

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org>

Childhood Bereavement Network

<https://childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/about>

Winston's Wish

<https://www.winstonwish.org>

Cruse Scotland

<http://www.crusescotland.org.uk>

Hope Again

<https://www.hopeagain.org.uk/hope-again-videos>



REACHING OUT FOR HELP!

It is important to remember you are not alone. Why not try reaching out to a trusted friend, family member or adult?

There are also trained specialists and professionals who are here to support you and anyone else who is bereaved.

The Miracle Foundation have a great team of counsellors and art therapists that can help you. We are here to support and help you when you are struggling through difficult times.

The Miracle Foundation SCIO are a bereavement and trauma organisation for Children and Young People between the age of 4 and 18 years old.

We have a great team of counsellors and art therapists that can help you deal with the thoughts and feelings you are experiencing. We will help you develop healthy techniques to deal with your emotions, build on your emotional strength and provide you with a hope for the future. We are here to support and help you when you are struggling during difficult times.



USEFUL CONTACTS

If someone is at risk of coming to harm, the services would need to get in touch with emergency services or appropriate authorities.

CHILDLINE

A confidential service, operating times can be found on the website.

TEL: 0800 1111

ONLINE COUNSELLING: 1-2-1 chat

SHOUT

A free confidential and anonymous service available 24/7.

TEXT: 85258

SAMARITANS

Whatever you are going through, Samaritans can be called any time, from any phone for free.

TEL: 116 123

IF YOU NEED HELP/SUPPORT STRAIGHT AWAY, YOU CAN CALL 999 OR GO STRAIGHT TO MY NEAREST ACCIDENT AND EMERGENCY DEPT IF YOU CAN GET THERE SAFELY.



THE MIRACLE
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