

Managing and working through grief

Managing grief when someone has died is incredibly difficult, but there are strategies you can use to help you work through your feelings. Get some tips for managing grief, and find out what to do if you're finding it really tough.

Why it's useful to develop strategies to manage your grief

When someone dies it can turn your life completely upside down and wreak absolute havoc on your emotions and physical health. Whatever you feel after someone dies, it's important to remember that everyone reacts to death differently. Don't get too caught up worrying about whether you are managing grief the 'right' way. Everyone will have different reactions and ways of coping at different times. This doesn't mean that your way is wrong, it might just be different from everyone else's.

That said, grief is an incredibly difficult, disruptive experience to go through, so it can be useful to develop some strategies to help you work through your feelings.

Strategies for managing grief

There are lots of things you can try to help you work through grief after someone has died. How you feel about what has happened will change over time; so some strategies may feel like they work better at different points in time than others. Some strategies you can try include:

Grief time. Allow yourself 15 or 20 minutes each day to grieve. Make sure you are in a space where you can be alone. Switch off your phone. This time is a safety valve – it's an opportunity to allow yourself to deal with any feelings you have stored up. How you use it is up to you. Think, cry, pray, meditate, write, or draw.

Keep a diary. Write down your feelings, your grief, and the memories of the person who has passed away. It's a great way to keep track of how your grief changes over the weeks and months – and can be used as proof in difficult moments, that you are making progress.

Let yourself cry (if you can). Tears are often a sign of strength and show that you are prepared to work through your grief. So if you feel like crying, don't hold yourself back. If you want to cry and can't, though, don't worry. A lot of people find it really hard to cry, and express their grief in other ways.

This may help if...

- › *Someone close to you has died*
- › *You're struggling to cope after someone has died*
- › *You don't know how to manage your feelings about the death of a loved one*

Take action...

- › *Give yourself 15 minutes a day to grieve*
- › *Write down how you're feeling*
- › *Learn positive coping strategies*

Talk to someone you trust. Grieving can feel really lonely, and it's a long process, so find someone you can talk to – e.g. a friend or family member. A lot of people find it helpful to talk to people who have been through similar experiences. If you think you might, consider joining a support group.

The most important thing to know about these strategies, is that you need to give yourself some time. It can take a really long time to work through your lowest moments when someone has died, and it's normal to feel like your life has been turned upside down for a while.

If you're finding it hard to deal with your grief.

It's normal to feel completely overwhelmed when someone dies, but it does get better. If you've given some of the above strategies a go, and given yourself some time, but are still finding it incredibly difficult to deal with what is going on, it's a good idea to go and visit your GP. Managing your grief will be much easier and faster if you have professional support.