

**Be gentle on yourself.
Give yourself time.
Take it easy.**

How to cope

There is no 'right' way to grieve. We all grieve in our own way, in our own time.

- 1)** Talk to someone you trust about how you're feeling - a friend, family members, school counsellor, minister, phone line service like Lifeline, or Youthline. "I couldn't see the point in talking about it to anyone because talking wouldn't change things back, but after talking to my best friend it felt good to let it out."
- 2)** Write out or draw how you feel. You might need to do this several times, as your feelings will change.
- 3)** Look through photos of the person or thing you have lost if you have any. This can make you feel your loss very intensely for a while. It can help you to draw your feelings to the surface, so make sure you're in a place where you feel comfortable about showing your emotions before you do it.

4) Write a letter saying good-bye to the person or thing you have lost. You can put in it whatever you want as it's just for yourself. You can write about the person, what you liked, what used to drive you mad that they did, what you did together.

5) Escape from your grief for a while by listening to some of your favourite music, going to the movies, playing sport or reading. Anything that gives you a rest from it.

All of the above things help you let out your grief. Choose whatever suits you.

grief and loss

Helping a friend who is grieving

All you have to do is BE AROUND. Let your friend know that you understand they are going through a hard time and that you will be there if they want to talk or go out. Talk to them about what you've read in this booklet about what helps a person deal with their grief.



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Whenever we lose something that was valuable to us we feel grief. It changes us, and can give us wisdom and experience.

Grief is a normal part of life.

We learn what's important to us and what's not. We can feel grief if we lose good things like:

people - through death or a relationship break-up or because a relationship changes

health - through illness or accident

things we own - by accident or theft

places - through moving schools, house or city

our place in the world - through losing a place on a team or a job, or because we have changed ourselves

pets.

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and pretend it's just been a
bad dream”

Grief feelings: These will come and go, and you may feel only some of them.

Shock/disbelief: “I wake up in the morning and pretend it's just been a bad dream.” You feel in a daze, numb, empty. It can take a while for what has happened to sink in. Sometimes what has happened is so bad you don't want to believe it's true.

Sadness: You want to cry. It helps to let these feelings out when you feel them, rather than pushing them down. Afterwards you usually feel better and have a sense of relief.

Anger/blaming: You may feel angry. You may want to blame a particular person for the loss. Or you may blame yourself and feel guilty.

Yearning: “It's hard for me to stop thinking about it, even when I'm trying hard to concentrate on what the teacher is saying.” There is a gap in your life where that person or thing once was. You understand that you can't have things the way they were, but you think, talk and may dream a lot about it.

Out of control: “Why do I have to keep on crying all the time?” You may feel anxious because you suddenly have heaps less control over your feelings - tears want to spill out at any time. This will pass over time.

Physical Changes: Your body can feel grief too. You may feel generally unwell and have headaches, stomach aches, or get colds easily for a while. You may have a change in appetite or feel tired a lot.

If you have lost someone or something that was very important to you, you may feel grief for a long time. Sometimes grief can lead to an illness called depression. Depression is when you feel hopeless, angry or miserable all the time. You may think a lot about death and suicide, find it hard to concentrate or make decisions and feel that you don't enjoy anything any more.

This is not a normal part of grief if it goes on for two weeks or longer. If you're feeling this way it's important to tell someone you trust so that you can get some help.

“Why do I have to keep on crying all the time?”