

Introduction to Grief, Loss and Bereavement

The Australian Centre for Grief and
Bereavement's Aged Care Program

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In the spirit of reconciliation, the Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement acknowledges the traditional and historical owners of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.



About Us

The Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement (ACGB) is an independent, not for profit organisation. As the largest provider of grief and bereavement education in Australia, ACGB has been providing support for bereaved and grieving Australians for over 25 years.

- ACGB Operates as a Victorian state wide Bereavement Counselling and Supports Service (BCSS). The BCSS also provide clinical supervision, secondary consultation and community support.
- ACGB provides nation wide grief, loss and bereavement education in the form of webinars, courses, workshops, and customised trainings.
- ACGB is also one of four organisations funded by the Australian Government Department of Health to deliver a COVID-19 grief and trauma response package to the aged care sector.

Learning Outcome

- Understand and identify the impact of grief and loss
- Understand grief models and theories that inform the field of loss, grief and bereavement
- Identify non-death related losses as we age



“The expectation that we can be immersed by suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet”

(Remen, 1996)



Understanding Grief and Loss

What is Loss ?

Loss is a common experience that we all encounter throughout our lifetime; it does not discriminate against age, sex, race, economic status, religion, nationality or culture.

Terminology

GRIEF



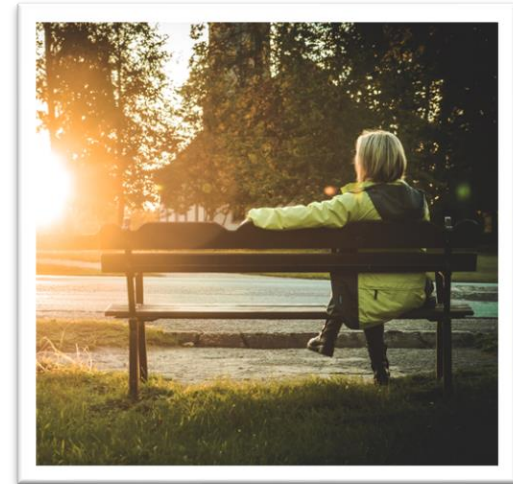
The normal reaction and experience of loss.

MOURNING



The process that one goes through in adapting to the death of the person (e.g., rituals, cultural beliefs/practices).

BEREAVEMENT



Is the period after loss when grief and mourning occurs.

(Worden, 2009)

(Lally & Valentine-French, 2019, p. 438)

Terminology

ACUTE GRIEF



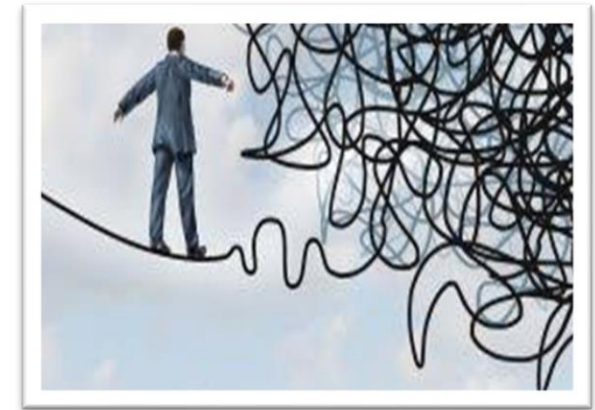
... early response to loss

... our ability to
integrate the loss



INTEGRATED GRIEF

PROLONGED GRIEF DISORDER

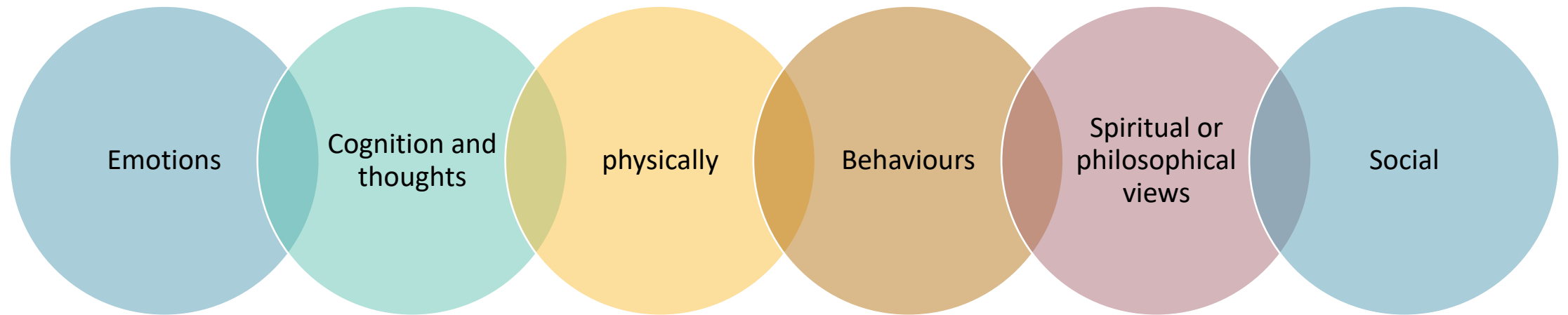


...persistence of acute grief symptoms

Primary and Secondary Losses



How does grief affect us?



(Hall, 2014, p. 7)

How does grief affect us ?

EMOTIONS	THOUGHTS	PHYSICAL	BEHAVIOURS	SPIRITUAL	SOCIAL
Sadness	"Why me?"	Fatigue	Social withdrawal	Change in spiritual beliefs	People treat them differently
Helplessness	"Its not fair"	Headaches	Crying	Questioning life's meaning	Lack of support
Anger	"It's my fault"	Upset stomach	Avoidance	Trust that this is part of God's plan	People want to 'fix' them
Anxiety	"I can't think/focus"	Sweating	Sleep disturbance	Not sure who to turn to	Lifestyle changes
Guilt	"I think I am going crazy"	Dizziness	Change in eating habits and appetite	"Why am I being punished?"	Having to learn a new skill
Shock	"This can't be happening"	Nausea	Acting out feelings	"Why did God let me down?"	Feel like they don't fit in anymore
Denial	"I'll never get over this"	Body pains	Unable to make decisions	"I know that this is God's way"	People don't want to talk about it anymore

Grief and Loss Models and Theories

Five Stages of Grief



(Kübler-Ross, 1997)

Worden's Tasks of Mourning

Task	Brief Description
1. To accept the reality of the loss	Accepting that the person has died and is not coming back
2. To process the pain of grief	To feel the feelings of grief
3. To adjust to a world without the deceased	Adjusting to how the death impacts everyday life; one's own sense of self; and one's beliefs, values, and assumptions about the world
4. To find an enduring connection with the deceased in the midst of embarking on a new life	Finding ways to stay connected with person who has died, but also to embrace new experiences and continue living life

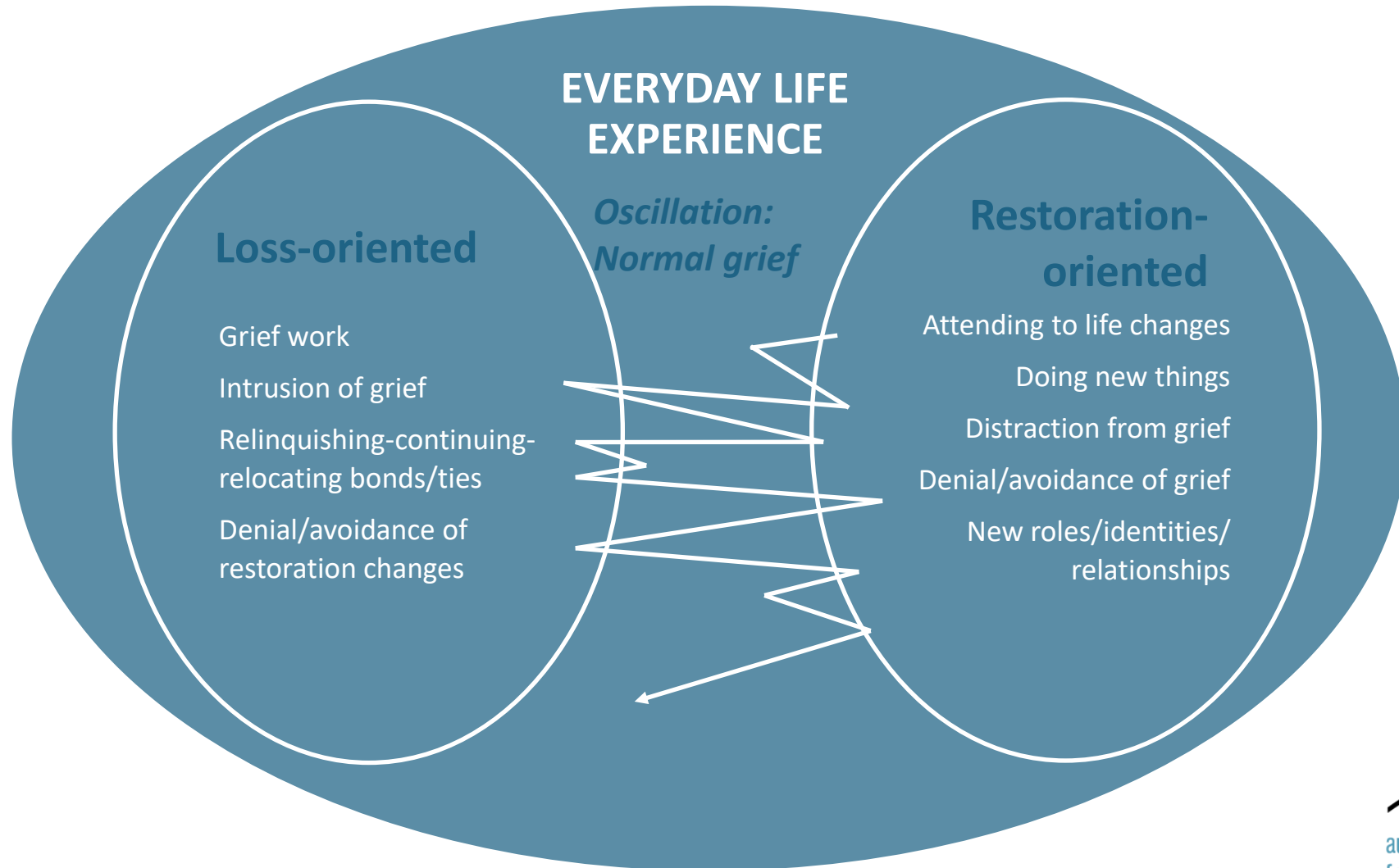
(Worden, 2009)

Worden's Mediators of Mourning

Mediators
1. Kinship: Who died?
2. The nature of the attachment
3. How the person died
4. Historical Antecedents
5. Personality variables
6. Social variables
7. Concurrent losses and stresses

(Worden, 2009)

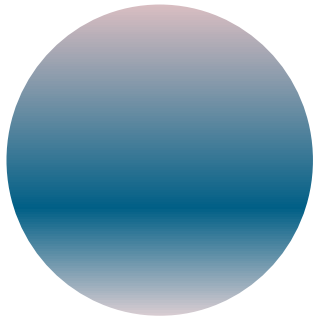
Dual Process Model



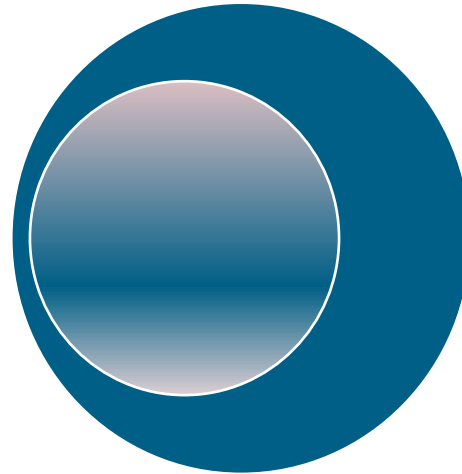
(Stroebe & Schut, 1999, p. 213)

Growing Around Grief

Tonkin (1996) suggests that in this model grief that grief never goes away, however, we can grow a new life around it.

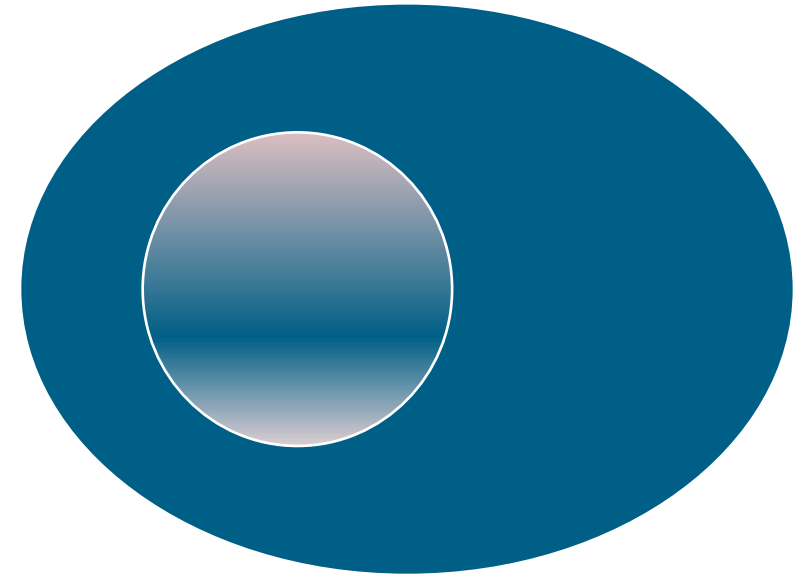


The circle represents a life that is totally consumed by grief.



Grief will never entirely disappear but over time it will shrink and become a manageable part of life .

(Tonkin, 1996)



The grief still exists however, life grows around it.



Continuing Bonds

The bereaved find ways to redefine the relationship with the deceased, allowing for a continued bond.

(Klass, et al., 1996)

Continuing Bonds

“Hello Again” Letter

What knowing you means to me is ...

What you taught me about life is...

What it's been like for me since your death...

What I have always wanted to tell you is...

My most treasured memory of you is...

What you never understood was...

What I want you to know about is...

What I realise now is...

The one question I wanted to ask you is...

I want to keep you in my life by...

I wish you were here, so we could...

Please forgive me...

I forgive you...

Thank you...

I love you...



Meaning Reconstruction

A process of reconstructing meaning through a grief and loss experience.



(Niemeyer, 2000)

Grieving Styles

Intuitive

Instrumental

- Emotive
- Affective
- Social
- Seeking Support
- Managing Feelings

- Active
- Cognitive
- Solitary
- Problem-solving
- Managing cognitions

(Martin & Doka, 2011)

Disenfranchised Grief

When a person experiences a loss that is not or cannot be openly acknowledged, publicly mourned, or socially supported.



Grief and ageing



- Older people have likely experienced many varied losses
- Life experience can bring wisdom
- Don't presume resilience, accumulated losses can affect a person in different ways.
- Ask questions such as what has helped in the past? How did you get through that? Or What do you feel grateful for?

Non-death related losses

A loss of things we value that provide us with a sense of safety.



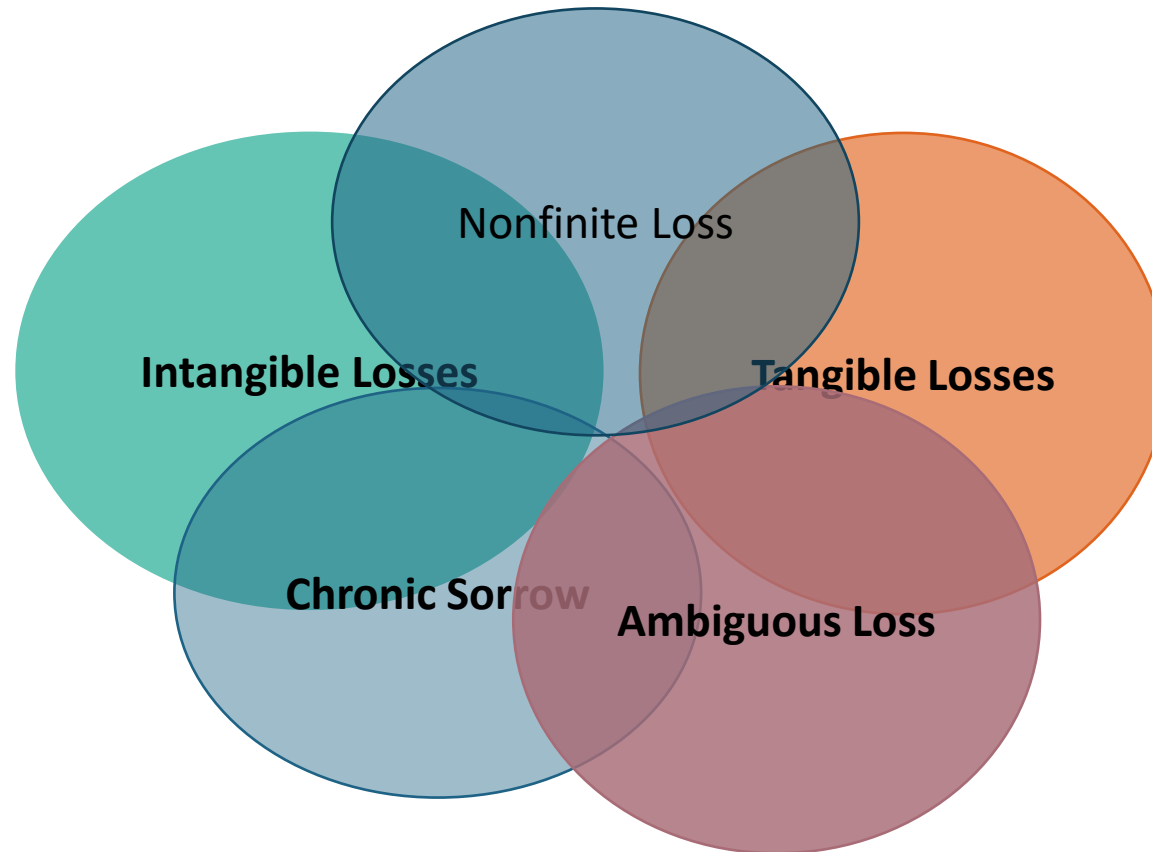
Non-death related losses as we age

Non death related losses

- Loss of Roles
- Loss of Independence
- Loss of Place
- Loss of Dignity
- Loss of Personhood
- Invisibility

(Harris, 2020)

Overlap of Different Types of Non-Death Losses



(Harris, 2020)

Hallmarks of Anticipatory Grief

Anticipatory grief when we anticipate a loss

- Roller coaster of uncertainty
- Big white elephant in the room
- Expectation that there is time to prepare for the person's death/grief that will facilitate adjustment.

“The rehearsal is not the same as the main act.”

(Phyllis Silverman, 1974)

What can we do...?

- Monitor Our Own Attitudes
- Challenge Assumptions
- Be Inclusive
- Be Critically Aware

(Harris, 2020)

What do most grieving people want from another person ?

- A witness to their grief and pain
- Escape from people who inflict cheeriness
- Support, time, space
- An outsider to accompany them through grief
- Validation of their feelings
- Reflection on their coping and solutions

Grief later in life- How can we help?

- Assess the company of others and social support
- Encourage self determination and independence (ADL's)
- Protective factors- Prayer, art, music, creativity, connection
- Reminiscence therapy
- Rituals- Come out in the story
- Behavioural activation- Identity, purpose and mastery
- Kindness, Roger's core conditions, listen,
- Dignity therapy- End of life care

Human Kindness

- We each have gifts and limits that are a normal part of being human. Both need to be acknowledged and honoured.
- Be careful not to devalue your gift of being present over the impulse to DO something.

(Harris, 2020)

Resources

- Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement: www.Grief.org.au
- [Lifeline Australia - 13 11 14 - Crisis Support. Suicide Prevention.](http://www.lifeline.org.au)
<https://www.lifeline.org.au>
- Carer Gateway: <https://www.carergateway.gov.au/>
- Support for Carers: <https://www.carersaustralia.com.au/>
- Information for people needing care:
<https://www.myagedcare.gov.au/>



Grief Information Sheets

- About grief
- Supporting someone who is grieving
- Grief, Anniversaries and Significant Occasions
- Grief and Children (Pre-School, aged five and under)
- Grief and children (Primary School, aged 6-12)
- Adolescents and Grief
- Bereavement in the Workplace
- Telephone Helpline Sheet
- Companion Animal Loss
- Counsellors working from home during Covid -19 Pandemic

Grief, anniversaries and significant events

When we are bereaved the calendar of our life is altered forever. It becomes divided into the time before and after the death. We may find that there will be certain times that may trigger a grief response. This response sometimes called an 'anniversary reaction' does not mean that you are not coping with your grief; it is simply a reflection of your feelings for the deceased.

Reminders

About Grief

'I'd never had a serious loss before and I the crying which peaked at the funeral and then I wasn't prepared for the utter emotional, ph I wasn't prepared for all the other emotions: anger, the fear.' – Annie.

Grief is our response to loss. It is the normal, natural and needed way of working out thoughts, feelings, beliefs, feelings, emotions. With the support of family and friends, many people adapt to their feelings, however, for some, the experience of grief can be overwhelming.

Supporting someone who is grieving

Death doesn't just disrupt a person's life – it can change it forever. When someone you know experiences a bereavement, it may be hard to know what to say or how to offer comfort and support. This is particularly true if you have not experienced a bereavement yourself. There are many ways to support someone who is grieving.

How to help a bereaved person in the first few days after a death

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