

If you have a close friend whom you can trust, then sharing your thoughts and feelings with them can be helpful. It doesn't always work, but sometimes it can be helpful for family members to share memories of the deceased with each other.

There is **no right or wrong way** to grieve - but there are healthy ways to cope with the pain. **You can get through it!** Grief that is expressed and experienced has a potential for healing that eventually can **strengthen** and **enrich life**.

### How to cope with your own grief

- Be with **caring people** - spend time with your family and those who care for you
- Take enough **time**
- Express your **feelings**
- Accept a **changed life** - your routine may need to change
- Reach out for **help** - let people know when you need **companionship** and **support**
- Come to **terms** with your loss
- Make a **new beginning** - consider forming new relationships at your own pace
- Postpone major life changes - your judgement may not be the best while you are mourning, and the changes may add to the stress you are already feeling



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# Managing Loss

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## Managing Loss

Apart from the death of a loved one and the obvious sense of loss we may experience, there are other losses which many of us experience in life such as; relationship breakdown, loss of employment, loss of home, loss of limb or other physical disability, leaving your homeland.

### **Bereavement**

The death of someone close to us may leave us with many emotions:

- Emptiness
- Numbness
- Disbelief
- Shock
- Relief
- Longing
- Fear
- Loneliness

We each experience **bereavement** in our own unique way. It can be **emotional, physical, spiritual** or **social**. The experience of **bereavement** can be felt as one of intense pain and grief.

### **Grief**

**Grief** is a natural reaction to the death of someone who has been close to us. Grieving takes **time**, it cannot be rushed, nor can we predict how long it will take. Sometimes it can be difficult to understand what is happening, why we feel like we do.

**Grieving** is a process in which learn to **accept** and **adapt** to the loss of someone we have loved or invested our lives in. **Remember, our pain and suffering is the consequence of our loving.**

It is exhausting and at times it is hard to believe we will ever be without it. However **experience** tells us that with time it will **ease** and become **manageable**. Eventually we will gradually enjoy life again. It is important to take things **slowly** and **let time pass**.

Obstacles to grieving include:

- **Refusal** to **accept** the loss
- Lack of **emotional support**
- Difficulty in expressing feelings and trying too hard to **'stay in control'**
- Unfinished business – **regrets**
- Worry about the **financial issues**
- If the death was a result of **suicide**
- Past bereavements
- Family issues or **disagreements**

**Grief** usually passes through **three stages**, but these stages are not separate, nor do they necessarily follow in sequence:

1. An initial stage of **shock** when it is difficult to believe that the death has occurred. This stage may last **minutes** or **weeks**.
2. A feeling of **acute anguish** which usually lasts from weeks to months when feelings of **depression** occur, planning the future may be difficult
3. A phase of **resolution** after months, or even years

### **Anniversaries**

**Anniversaries** can be very helpful in the grieving process. Often the first anniversary is described or experienced as a **turning point**. People sometimes say they dread the **anniversary** and it can be very **anxiety provoking**. Yet, sometimes, it can be much less painful than imagined. Sometimes people find it helpful to visit a place which has **good memories** of time spent with their loved ones.