

Let's Talk About Grief

- When you experience a life-changing event or the loss of someone or something important in your life, it is normal to experience a sense of loss. Your response to this loss is called grief, and it is something every person has in common.
- Loss of any kind can be grieved.
- Grief is human. It is a natural response to loss — not an illness.
- There is no “wrong” way to grieve.
- Cultural traditions and beliefs can play an important role in grieving.
- Grief does not just “stop,” but it can change over time.
- Experiencing grief honours your loss.

Grief is not just sadness

- **Grief can affect** your physical, mental, social, cultural, spiritual, and financial (money) wellbeing.
- **Grief can cause** trouble sleeping (more or less than usual), trouble focusing, upset stomach (belly), aches, and pains.
- **Grief can feel like** sadness, anger, relief, shame, guilt, anxiety, hope, joy, fear, or numbness. You may feel all of these emotions at the same time or not at all.
- **Grief can bring up** questions about your place in the world, intrusive (unwanted) thoughts, a loss of routine, and other complex thoughts and emotions.
- For many people, connecting with their social network and local community can help with grief and loneliness.

Tips to help someone who is grieving

Listen with compassion

- Avoid judgement.
- Do not try to fix, save, or rescue.
- Try to understand the person’s feelings and validate them (let the person know that their feelings are normal).

Respect their loss

- Name the person or the loss.
- Ask about the person who died.
- Let the grieving person repeat their stories.

Avoid cliché and “at least” statements

- Sayings that can dismiss and invalidate a person’s grief and pain include:
 - › “My condolences.”
 - › “At least they’re in a better place.”
 - › “It’s time to move on.”
 - › “At least you have other children.”

- Examples of what to say:
 - › “You are not alone. Can I keep checking in with you?”
 - › “You’ve been through so much. It’s normal to feel this way.”
 - › “I care about you and I want to support you.”

Ways to help

- Make them a meal.
- Run an errand for them.
- Check in with them often.

Resources

Grief and coping

Coping with Grief and Trauma: When Tragedy Turns Life Upside Down

- › www.nshealth.ca/patient-education-resources/2517

MyGrief.ca – Canadian Virtual Hospice

- › www.MyGrief.ca



Life Changes

- › www.nshealth.ca/lifechanges

Kids and youth grief

Dougy Center – The National Grief Center for Children & Families

- › www.Dougy.org

KidsGrief.ca – Canadian Virtual Hospice

- › <https://Kidsgrief.ca>

Finding grief support in your area

- › www.nshealth.ca (search “grief”)

Healing Pathways-Grieving Well™ – Nova Scotia Hospice Palliative Care Association

- › <https://grievingwell.nsphca.ca>

211 Nova Scotia

- › Phone: 211
- › Phone (toll-free): 1-855-466-4994
- › <https://ns.211.ca> (search “grief support”)

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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Designed and Managed by: Library Services

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To be reviewed October 2028 or sooner, if needed.

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