



# Let's Talk About Grief

When death or a life-altering event happens, we can experience a sense of loss for someone or something important. Our response to this loss is called grief, and it's something we all have in common.

- ▶ Loss of any kind can be grieved.
- ▶ Grief is personal, universal and natural.
- ▶ There is no “wrong” way to grieve.
- ▶ Grief doesn't just “stop” but can change over time.
- ▶ Experiencing grief honours your loss.
- ▶ Cultural traditions and beliefs can play an important role in grieving.

## Grief Isn't Just Sadness

**Grief Can Impact:** Physical, mental, social, cultural, spiritual and financial wellbeing.

**Grief Can Cause:** Trouble sleeping (more or less than usual) trouble focusing, upset stomach (belly), aches and pains.

**Grief Can Feel Like:** Sadness, shame, guilt, anger, anxiety, relief, hope, joy, fear, numbness. You may feel a mix of emotions all at the same time or none at all.

**Grief Can Bring About :** Questioning your place in the world, intrusive thoughts, loss of routine, and other complex thoughts and emotions.



For many people, connecting with your social network and local community can help with grief and loneliness.

## Tips to Help People Who Are Grieving

### Listen with Compassion

- No Judgment
- Understand and Validate
- Don't try to fix, save, or rescue

### Respect the Loss

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

### Avoid Cliche and “at least” Statements

Sayings like these can dismiss and invalidate grief and pain:

- “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 and How to Help

- “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.”
- Make a meal, check in regularly, or run an errand for the person grieving

## Helpful Resources

**Grief and Coping:** [nshealth.ca](https://nshealth.ca) (search “grief”) | [mygrief.ca](https://mygrief.ca)

**Kids & Youth Grief:** [dougy.org](https://dougy.org) | [kidsgrief.ca](https://kidsgrief.ca)

**Finding Grief Support in Your Area:** Dial 211 (1-855-466-4994 toll free) or visit [ns.211.ca](https://ns.211.ca) and search for “grief support”

**Nova Scotia Hospice Palliative Care Association:** [nshpca.ca](https://nshpca.ca) (Grief and Bereavement Resources)