

Grief after bereavement or loss

Most people experience grief when they lose something or someone important to them. If these feelings are affecting your life, there are things you can try that may help.

Bereavement, grief and loss can cause many different symptoms and they affect people in different ways. There's no right or wrong way to feel.

As well as bereavement, there are other types of loss such as the end of a relationship or losing a job or home.

Some of the most common symptoms include:

- shock and numbness – this is usually the first reaction to loss, and people often talk about "being in a daze"
- overwhelming sadness, with lots of crying
- tiredness or exhaustion
- anger – towards the person you've lost or the reason for your loss
- guilt – for example, guilt about feeling angry, about something you said or did not say, or not being able to stop your loved one dying

These feelings may not be there all the time and powerful feelings may appear unexpectedly. It's not always easy to recognise when bereavement, grief or loss are the reason you're acting or feeling differently.

Stages of bereavement or grief

Experts generally accept that we go through 4 stages of bereavement or grief:

1. Accepting that your loss is real
 2. Experiencing the pain of grief
 3. Adjusting to life without the person or thing you have lost
 4. Putting less emotional energy into grieving and putting it into something new
- Most people go through all these stages, but you will not necessarily move smoothly from one to the next.

Your grief might feel chaotic and out of control, but these feelings will eventually become less intense over time.

Things you can try to help with bereavement, grief and loss

Do

- try talking about your feelings to a friend, family member, health professional or counsellor – you could also contact a support organisation such as [Cruse Bereavement Care](#) or [call: 0808 808 1677](tel:08088081677) or contact your progress coach in College – based in student services.
- try simple lifestyle changes to help you feel more in control and able to cope (link below)
- find out about [how to get to sleep](#) if you're struggling to sleep
- consider peer support, where people use their experiences to help each other.

Don't

- do not try to do everything at once – set small targets that you can easily achieve
- do not focus on the things you cannot change – focus your time and energy into helping yourself feel better
- try not to tell yourself that you're alone – most people feel grief after a loss and support is available
- try not to use alcohol, cigarettes, gambling or drugs to relieve grief – these can all contribute to poor mental health

Further information and support

See a GP (111) if:

- you're struggling to cope with stress, anxiety or a low mood
- you've had a low mood for more than 2 weeks
- things you're trying yourself are not helping

[Home - Cruse Bereavement Support](https://cruse.org.uk) – <https://cruse.org.uk>

[How to be happier - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)

[How to get to sleep - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk) [Finding peer support | Mind, the mental health charity - help for mental health problems](#) – www.mind.org.uk

[Contact Us | Samaritans](#) - jo@samaritans.org – **116123** – self help app