

The Loss of a Loved One

Advice for looking after both yourself and others

The loss of a relative or close friend is one of the hardest challenges many people face during their life. The sadness typically diminishes in intensity as time passes, but grieving is an important process in order to overcome these feelings and continue to embrace the time you had with your loved one.

You may well be coping with your own grief and also that of a parent or other close relative or friend. Here, we give advice for looking after both yourself and others.

- **Try to look after yourself:** loss of appetite is normal, but try to eat even if you don't feel like it.
- **Try to keep to some kind of routine:** it can help to have some structure to your day, even if you don't have to go out to work.
- **Try not to be anxious about how you are feeling:** there's no set way that you 'should' be feeling, so try to go with the flow and accept your emotional response.
- **Try not to be upset or offended:** sometimes people who mean well, might say or do the wrong thing.

- **Don't be embarrassed to ask for help:** everyday tasks will be difficult at first. Don't be afraid to ask for help, close friends and family will want to support you but might not know how.
- **It's OK to laugh:** losing a loved one will generate a lot of mixed emotions and memories. Don't feel that they all have to be sad. It can be really comforting to share happy and funny memories of the person who died, even if you then share some tears as well.
- **Remember that everyone grieves differently and at a different pace:** try not to be upset if another family member doesn't seem to be as distressed as you.
- **Only do things when you feel ready:** some things must be done within legal timeframes, but other things can wait until you are ready.
- **Keep talking to your loved one:** Many people have conversations in their head with the person who has died. This can be a comfort when faced with making big decisions in the future.



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