

# Moving on or feeling stuck.

## Loss and grief can be experienced differently.

Some people will move through each of the phases of grief on their own, and the stages can be fluid. It can be really hard to deal with the feeling of a heavy loss. No matter what the hardship grief is a universal experience. It is not about whether you will grieve a loss but when. Try not to hide your sadness reaching out for help can help you identify what is normal to experience during grief, what you should expect, and that everybody can feel differently. **Remember how you feel is true to you, there is no right or wrong way to feel any loss and it can take time.**

## Sometimes the grief process doesn't go well.

When you experience a loss you can become stuck in one stage of grief, unable or unwilling to move through the process. In a worst-case scenario, the person can continue to be angry, sad, or even in denial for a very long time. If this is continuing for over a year it may be that further support is needed. When this happens it may be that you need to talk to a grief counsellor to help you move out of the stage you are stuck in.

This may be needed so you don't miss the opportunity to move on and build a new life that can bring happiness in the here and now.

Even if you don't become stuck in one particular stage of grief and loss, you might get stuck in the cycle. You move through the stages, but then move back to the previous ones, never quite able to free yourself. This return to earlier stages usually means you haven't thoroughly dealt with them yet. In cases of extreme loss, this may be necessary for a time. Shock, denial, anger, and bargaining can eventually lead to acceptance.

General support and information correct at time of update 2022 (c)

# Do's and Don'ts Supporting your children

**DO** let your genuine concern and caring show, but not to the degree that it adds to the distress.

**DO** be available to listen or to help with whatever else seems needed at the time.

**DO** say you are sorry about what happened and about their pain and allow them to express as much unhappiness as they are feeling at the moment and are willing to share.

**DO** encourage them to be patient with themselves, not to expect too much of themselves or to impose any "should" on themselves and allow them to talk about their loss appropriately as much and as often as they want to.

**DO** talk about the special, endearing qualities of what they've lost.

**DON'T** let your own sense of helplessness keep you from reaching out.

**DON'T** say you know how they feel, not everybody will experience loss the same way.

**DON'T** say "You ought to be feeling better by now" or anything else which implies a judgement about their feelings.

**DON'T** tell them what they should feel or change the subject when they want to talk about their loss.

**DON'T** avoid mentioning their loss out of fear of reminding them of their pain (they haven't forgotten).

**DON'T** try to find something positive (e.g. a moral lesson, closer family ties, etc.) about the loss, or point out at least they have another, or can always have another etc.

**DON'T** suggest that they should be grateful for the time they've had, it may make them shut down from their feelings.

## Useful information sites:

[info@winstonswish.org](mailto:info@winstonswish.org)

Winston Wish helpline 08088 020 021

[www.rainbowtrust.org.uk](http://www.rainbowtrust.org.uk)

[careforthefamily.org.uk](http://careforthefamily.org.uk)

This leaflet is produced as a simple and general guide. If you do have any concerns about issues around grief and loss, and supporting you and your child/ren and want to discuss your worries or want some simple advice do not hesitate to contact your child's school or your PSA - [linda.parry@wavell.hants.sch.uk](mailto:linda.parry@wavell.hants.sch.uk)

# Understanding and supporting emotions

# Grief



## Information guide to help understand loss and grieving.

# General information on understanding and supporting emotions—Grief

## Experiencing loss

### Everyone experiences loss and grief differently.

Many people who experience a loss of anything, including a friend or loved one experience several stages of grief as they deal with a loss.

Dr. Kübler-Ross refined her original model of 5 stages of grief to include 7 stages as a more in-depth analysis of the components of the grief process. The stages include shock, denial, anger, bargaining, depression (sadness), reconstruction and acceptance.

Importantly these stages were developed to support all loss not just the experience of the loss of a loved one but also if someone becomes ill, the loss of friends, the loss of school or any personal loss. These stages are explained under the grief process.

### What does loss and grief look and feel like?

Grief and loss can be different for everyone, and can bring up many of questions, such as:

How am I supposed to be feeling?  
Is it wrong for me to feel different from others?  
Is it normal to feel this way?  
When will I feel different?

Grief and loss are experienced in many ways. Emotions can range from sadness, anxiety, anger, blame and even numbness.

Those feelings are valid and despite how intense these may be it is part of progressing through the stages.

**The bottom line** is we experience grief and loss our own way. There is no right or wrong way to feel and it takes time to grieve. **The most important advice is allow time to grieve.**



## The grief process

### SHOCK & DENIAL

Learning of a loss can be a shock with numbed disbelief. You may deny the reality of the loss at some level in order to avoid the pain, or try to convince yourself or others the event hasn't happened or isn't permanent. The shock provides emotional protection from being overwhelmed all at once. **It is important to be aware that this may last for weeks.**

### PAIN & GUILT

Once the shock wears off it is often replaced with the pain of the loss. This may feel excruciating and almost unbearable or complete numbness. It is important to allow yourself to feel this try not to hide it or avoid it. You may feel guilty feelings or remorseful over things you felt you should have done or not done. Life can feel very scary at this time. **Remember it is not the same for everyone there is no right or wrong way to feel.**

### ANGER

Frustration gives way to anger, and you may lash out. You may be angry with the person who left you, or you may feel angry with yourself. You may start shouting at others, or showing irritation at everything from significant let-downs to minor inconveniences. **It is important to recognise that this stage can happen at any time, even after you go through a period of acceptance.**

### BARGAINING

You may rail against fate, questioning "Why me?" Or find yourself trying to reclaim what you've lost, try to bargain in vain with the 'powers that be' for a way out of your despair: "I will never get angry again if you just bring them back"! **Bargaining is a normal stage that sometimes brings up uncomfortable discussions that go nowhere and this part of the stages of grief help copes with the loss.**

## The grief process

### SADNESS (Depression)

You may feel sad and cry often. You might notice changes in your appetite or sleep patterns. You might have unexplained aches and pains. This stage can occur with any loss, it is a situational depression that may soon pass naturally as you move toward acceptance. This is a normal stage of grief and should be allowed, it is a time that some reflect on memories of the past, and this may make you sad. **It is important to be aware that this may reoccur/last for weeks. Remember it is different for everybody.**

### RECONSTRUCTION & WORKING THROUGH

As you start to adjust life becomes a little calmer and more organised. You will find your sadness begins to lift slightly. You will start to become more functional as your mind starts to work through your loss. Seeking realistic solutions to the loss, concerns and problems you may feel. **Moving to reconstruct a new normal can feel scary but it will happen in time.**

### ACCEPTANCE & HOPE

During this, the last of these stages, you will start to learn to accept and deal with your new reality. Acceptance does not necessarily mean instant happiness. You may feel that the pain you have experienced will never go away or you will return to 'normal'. However you will find a way forward. You will start to look forward and actually plan things for the future. Eventually, you will be able to think about your loss without pain. Sadness, yes! But the possible wrenching pain will be gone. You will once again anticipate some good times to come, and yes, even find joy again in the experience of living. **Moving to acceptance and hope is different for everybody, it is important to do this in your own time.**