Understanding Grief

Losing someone we love is one of life's most difficult experiences. Grief is the natural emotional response to that loss.

Everyone experiences grief in their own way, and there is no right or wrong way to grieve. Grief can affect our emotions, thoughts, and even our physical wellbeing.

Knowing what to expect can help people feel less alone during this time.

GRIEF IS LIKE WAVES

Many people think grief should slowly disappear over time. In reality, grief often comes and goes in waves. Some days may feel manageable, while other days the sadness may return strongly. This does not mean something is wrong, it simply means that memories and love for your loved one are still present. Over time, the waves usually become less intense and further apart, but it is normal for feelings to return on special occasions.

RESOURCES

AOAKE TE RĀ
A free service for those bereaved by suicide:
aoaketera.org.nz

AFTER A SUICIDE
Mental Health Foundation resources and links to support including free support when you text 1737:
afterasuicide.nz

CANCER SOCIETY
Some free counselling is available:
cancer.org.nz/how-we-can-help/support-we-offer/psychology-and-counselling

FAMILY WORKS
Individual and family counselling:
familyworkscentral.org.nz/counselling

MARY POTTER
Mary Potter staff offer free, confidential grief and bereavement support:
marypotter.org.nz/for-patients-families-carers/our-support/bereavement-support

SANDS WELLINGTON
Links to support for parents and whānau after the loss of a baby or infant:
sandswellingtonhutt.org.nz/counselling

SKYLIGHT RESOURCES & COUNSELLING
Helping with all grief and loss, particularly following a suicide, plus counselling for children:
skylight.org.nz/get-support/counselling

TALKING WORKS
A directory of counsellors in Wellington:
talkingworks.co.nz

THE GRIEF CENTRE
National resources and online counselling:
griefcentre.org.nz/counselling

Resources for Grieving



LYCHGATE FUNERALS

LYCHGATE FUNERALS
Web: lychgate.co.nz | Email: staff@lychgate.co.nz
Phone: 04 385 0745

Everybody grieves differently.

COMMON FEELINGS DURING GRIEF

People may experience many different emotions, including:

- Sadness
- Loneliness
- Shock or disbelief
- Anger or frustration
- Guilt or regret
- Relief (especially after a long illness)
- Anxiety about the future

All of these reactions are normal and are part of the grieving process.

PHYSICAL EFFECTS OF GRIEF

Grief can also affect the body. Some people notice:

- Fatigue or low energy
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Loss of appetite
- Difficulty concentrating
- Unexpected or "extreme" emotional reactions
- Feeling forgetful

These reactions are common and usually improve with time.

TIMES WHEN GRIEF MAY FEEL STRONGER

There will be many new "first times" following the loss of a loved one, and these can be accompanied with complex emotions. Certain moments can bring back strong memories and emotions, such as:

- Birthdays
- Wedding anniversaries
- Holidays and Christmas
- Family gatherings
- Hearing a favourite song
- Scents and aromas – especially perfumes or colognes
- Visiting meaningful places

These reactions are common and usually improve with time.

A COMFORTING THOUGHT...

Grief exists because love existed.

The sadness we feel reflects how deeply someone mattered in our lives. While grief changes over time, the love and memories we carry with us remain.

GENTLE WAYS TO SUPPORT YOURSELF

There are small things that can help during grief:

- **TALK WITH OTHERS**
  Sharing memories and feelings with friends or family can be very comforting
- **REMEMBER YOUR LOVED ONE**
  Looking a photos, telling stories, or keeping traditions can honour their memory.
- **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF**
  Try to rest, eat regularly, socialise and spend time outdoors when possible.
- **ACCEPT YOUR FEELINGS**
  Some days will feel easier than others, and this is completely normal. It is okay to be happy and sad at different times - these feelings are part of healing.

IF YOU NEED SUPPORT

Talking to someone can make a difference. Support may come from:

- Family and friends
- Community or church groups
- Aged care staff
- Grief support services
- Funeral home bereavement support

You are not alone in your grief.