

Traumatic Grief

Information for Young People

What is grief?

Grief is the word used to describe the different natural feelings we have after someone dies. You can grieve after a family member, friend, or other important person dies. You can show a range of:

Emotions and reactions: Sometimes you can be sad and miss the person. Other times you feel up to doing your usual activities, like hanging out with friends.

Thoughts: You can remember positive things about the person, but also have thoughts that bother you, have trouble focusing, or have other worries.

Behaviours: Your behaviour may change. You may be less active, be irritable, not eat or sleep as much as before, or hang out less with friends, and want to be by yourself more. There is no set amount of time for grieving. Most of you will find ways to cope with your feelings and the changes in your life. It is natural and OK if you still feel sad or miss the person even months or years later; especially if you are reminded of that person on certain special dates, events, activities or places you went together.

Who gets traumatic grief?

Most young people who experience the death of someone important adjust and recover over time. However, some of you may have more trouble adjusting and may develop ongoing challenging emotions. This can happen if the death was sudden, such as suicide, disaster, accident, or an unexpected medical reason. However, you can also have a traumatic reaction even if the death was from natural causes like old age, or a terminal illness such as cancer, especially if it was sudden, confusing, or scary in some way.

What can you do to feel better?

There are a lot of different things you can do to cope with grief related traumatic reactions, such as:

- > Express your feelings in creative ways such as art, writing, or dancing.
- > Do calming activities such as deep breathing or listen to music.
- > Talk to friends and family to help you through.
- > Check in with a General Practitioner, mental health professional to see if you need more help.



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Seeking help

Should you have any concerns about the issues raised in this pamphlet in relation to your child, we suggest you:

- > Contact your GP
- > Contact your Community Health Service
- > Contact Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service Connect Team on 1300 2 CAMHS (1300 222 647).

For more information

CAMHS
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
Women's and Children's Health Network
Telephone 1300 222 647



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