AN INFORMATION GUIDE FOR ADULTS

Grief and loss

Understanding grief, finding support and taking the next step.

Grief counselling in North Lakes, Brisbane, and online across Australia. Appointments depend on clinician suitability and availability.

What is grief?

Grief is a natural response to losing someone or something important. It can follow a death, separation, pregnancy loss, the loss of a pet, or changes to health, work or an expected future. You may also grieve before an anticipated loss. What matters is what the loss means to you. [1,2]

What can grief feel like?

Grief can affect your feelings, thoughts, body and relationships. You might notice: [1,2]

- Sadness, longing, numbness, anger, guilt, anxiety or relief - sometimes together.
- Difficulty concentrating, feeling preoccupied with the loss, or making decisions.
- Changes in sleep, appetite or energy, and wanting more company or more time alone.

Your response may be shaped by your relationship, earlier experiences, culture, faith and circumstances. People in the same family can grieve differently. [1,2]

You do not have to grieve in a set order

The familiar “five stages” are not a checklist. Feelings may overlap, come in waves or return around reminders and anniversaries. A difficult day does not mean you have failed or gone backwards. [2,4]

When might extra support help?

You can ask for help at any point. Consider speaking with your GP or a mental health professional if grief is overwhelming, everyday tasks feel unmanageable, or sleep, relationships or work are being significantly affected. You do not need to wait a certain number of months to seek support. [1,2]

PRACTICAL SUPPORT

Making room for grief

These are options, not a list you need to complete. Choose one small step that feels possible today. [1,3]

1. Keep the basics gentle

Try regular food, water, rest and gentle movement. Keep up medical appointments and be mindful of using alcohol or drugs to cope. [1,2]

2. Ask for specific help

Ask a trusted person for a meal, help with paperwork or quiet company. Let them know whether talking or a distraction would help. [1,3]

3. Allow both grief and pauses

You might spend time with memories, then turn to an ordinary task or something enjoyable. Taking a break from grief does not mean the loss matters less. You do not need to force tears or conversation. [3,4]

4. Choose your own ways to remember

Photos, writing, music, a personal ritual or cultural practices may feel meaningful. Choose what fits your beliefs and preferences. Plan some support for difficult dates or anniversaries. [1,2]

How can grief counselling help?

Therapy can offer space to understand the loss, express difficult feelings and adjust to changed roles or routines. Depending on your needs, it may also address guilt, avoidance, relationship difficulties, anxiety or depression. The aim is to help you live alongside the loss, rather than erase it. [1,5]

When grief remains intense and disabling

After a death, persistent longing or preoccupation that seriously disrupts life may warrant assessment for prolonged grief disorder. Diagnosis considers duration, circumstances and cultural expectations - not sadness alone. Grief-focused cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) has research support for this condition; it is not something everyone who grieves needs. [5,6]

RESOURCES AND NEXT STEPS

Finding the right support

You can begin with your GP, a trusted support person or a clinician experienced in grief. Many people adjust with support from those around them; others find professional help useful. [1]

Grief and loss support at The Psychology Hub

Our team can help match you with a clinician for adult grief and loss support, in person at North Lakes or online, depending on suitability and availability. At your first appointment, you can discuss what has happened, what is hardest now and what you hope support will offer. You can also ask about the approach, fees and confidentiality.

Find a clinician | Contact our team

1300 366 614 | info@thepsychologyhub.com.au
5/25 Discovery Drive, North Lakes QLD 4509

Reputable resources to read at your own pace

[1] Australian Psychological Society - Grief, common reactions and ways to seek support.

APS: grief information

[2] Healthdirect Australia - Plain-language information about loss and when to seek help.

Healthdirect: grief and loss

[3] Griefline - Practical ideas for coping with grief and caring for yourself.

Griefline: coping with grief

[4] Cruse Bereavement Support - Why grief does not follow a fixed sequence of stages.

Cruse: understanding the five stages

Evidence behind this guide

[5] Australian Psychological Society. Treatment for grief. Self-care suggestions also draw on the APS tips for grief and loss.

[6] Bryant RA and colleagues (2024). Cognitive Behavior Therapy vs Mindfulness in Treatment of Prolonged Grief Disorder: A Randomized Clinical Trial. JAMA Psychiatry, 81(7), 646-654. Read the research summary. This study involved adults with diagnosed prolonged grief disorder; its findings do not mean all grief requires treatment.

If you are in immediate danger or cannot keep yourself safe, call 000 or go to your nearest emergency department.

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