

# FINDING YOUR WAY THROUGH GRIEF

FOR TEENAGERS AND YOUNG ADULTS

In this booklet some young people speak  
about what helped them in their grief.

We hope this will help you understand how  
grief can affect us and what can help.

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Written by the social work team of St. Francis Hospice  
Dublin in collaboration with bereaved teenagers.

We would like to thank all the teenagers who helped  
in the development of this booklet. Each person was  
experiencing their own grief and gave us permission  
to use some of the things they said about grief, or the  
ways they experienced grief and to use their names.

With special thanks to:

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By Áine Walsh, 17

# Grief has so many faces

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Grieving is a natural part of coping with bereavement. There are no rules about what we should feel, and for how long. If someone close to you dies, it can be incredibly hard. We can react in a number of ways to the death of someone close. People often ask: "How should I grieve?" There are no right or wrong ways to grieve. There are, however, some helpful things and not-so-helpful things you can do while you're grieving.

Grief can be a massive bundle of different emotions, thoughts and behaviours. These may be very intense, particularly in the early days and weeks. You may expect to feel sad, but there are some feelings that some people can experience that you may be surprised by, which we also talk about here.

There are no rules about what we should feel, and for how long. There are no right or wrong ways to grieve.

## The grieving process

Grief is a *reaction* to loss, but it's also the name we give to the *process of coping* with the loss of someone who has died. We are hardwired to attach to people, so of course we are going to be distressed when they go. Grief is a healthy process of feeling comforted, coming to terms with a loss, and finding ways to adapt.

You might wonder, will I ever get over this? There is no magic cure for grief. It's not something you "get over."

A lot of people say grief is like a journey, things do get better, and there are things you can do to smooth over the rough and rocky places along the way.

## Everyone grieves differently



Our grief is as unique as a fingerprint and everyone's experience of grief is different. We all express our grief in different ways. Some days we may want to talk and other days not. Some people might want to visit a grave, others don't. There might be times you want to be with people and other times you may prefer to be alone. Some people might write in a journal. Some choose to express grief in a creative way, or others participate in sports or big energy activities.

“ In the beginning a lot of the time I just wanted to be alone but now there's more times I want the distraction of my friends as well - Karl, 17 ”

These are a mixture of some of the thoughts & feelings you **may** experience. Not everyone will experience these. However it helps if you can learn to recognise the ones you have.

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# Common grief responses

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## PHYSICAL EFFECTS

Grief can have physical effects and sometimes, grief affects our bodies. We may have **headaches** or **stomach aches**, or all of a sudden we don't feel like doing things.

We can go **off our food** or even find it becomes tasteless. Sometimes it's **hard to sleep**, and as a result, we can become **tired and irritable**.

Grief can **affect our thoughts** and **affect our concentration**, especially when trying to focus or pay attention at school or work.

Many people talk about having really bad nightmares that can **interrupt their sleep**. It's important to tell someone about these nightmares, as they can be quite frightening sometimes. Talking about them can make them less frightening and they will become easier to manage.

Grief can **affect our confidence** and how we think and feel about ourselves and we can wonder why this happened to us.





## SHOCK

Lots of people have told us they feel numb at first. You may think you should be feeling very upset but this numbness is your brain momentarily protecting you from the reality of the death.

For many people shock or disbelief is the first response when learning that someone close has died. Shock, like grief, is an individual response and can show up in many ways. Some people might express difficulty in hearing properly what has just been said, others might sob, others might

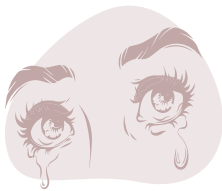
laugh and some might seem unaffected and do something that seems unimportant like starting to tidy up. Shock is a protective state, it allows us time to process bad news and acts as a temporary buffer before reality sinks in.

Some people tell us that with hindsight they felt ashamed for how they behaved at the funeral or immediately after the death. Try not to be alarmed or ashamed if your response seems inappropriate, shock shows itself in different ways.



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## LONELINESS / SADNESS



You may feel lonely even when surrounded by people. This can happen, even with your family, especially if you are all grieving differently. Some bereaved young people tell us they can feel very alone, because you might find that none of your friends has gone through anything similar and won't understand or know what to say.

There is a misconception that tears of grief are associated with not coping. Out of a wish to protect us, well-meaning people can pass comments such as, "He wouldn't want you to cry" which can shut down this expression of emotion.

Tears do not mean you are not coping. Scientists have found traces of stress chemicals in tears that could mean that crying is nature's way of relieving stress.

## ANGER



Anger is understandable in grief and it is something that many people will experience as they grieve. There is not always an easily understood reason for anger but it is perfectly natural to feel angry when someone we love dies. Angry at being abandoned, angry at the extent of the pain, angry that our life is changed, and angry that the world suddenly feels different. Or just angry at *“why me?”*

Anger as a response to grief is common, because sometimes, we can find it difficult to understand our emotions and express our feelings. This can be highly frustrating and in turn can lead to anger. Anger can show up in various ways. We can become aggressive or moody towards others, or might become disruptive at school and get in to fights at home, in school or work.

“How can I be angry at my loved one for dying?”

People can feel anger towards themselves for something they perceive they did or did not do. They can also feel angry with people they feel did not do enough to prevent their loved one from dying.

Quite common is the anger we can feel towards the person who has died, maybe for not allowing us the time to say goodbye. Many who grieve say, *“How can I be angry at my loved one for dying?”*. They know they couldn't help dying and we can feel aghast or ashamed at the idea of blaming them. These feelings get stuffed down and denied. Nonetheless these feelings exist, whether expressed or not.

Our culture is not always comfortable with anger, yet the feeling of anger itself is natural and not harmful as long as we express it a way that doesn't do any harm. It's a feeling like any other. Still, most have not learned to accept anger as a natural part of being human. People do get angry, and still they are good people. This is just one of many varied and intense emotions in response to losing someone you love.

## ANXIETY



Anxiety in grief is common, and often even an expected part of the grieving process. It makes sense that loss causes anxiety - worrying, perhaps about the future, who will look after you, your siblings, or your parent? You may feel you have new responsibilities and worry about how to cope with these. Losing someone we love can make us feel very vulnerable.

Grieving people often feel that they have lost their sense of safety and control in life. They find themselves panicking or worrying a lot about what or who else they could lose in the future. You may start to worry that something bad is going to happen but not know what or why. You may notice yourself worrying about your own or a loved one's health.

You may also have anxieties about what will happen to you - will you need to change schools or to move house? Will people act differently around you? How will you tell people what has happened? You may be worried about finances and feel anxious about the level of stress on other people in your family following bereavement.

If you experienced anxiety before your bereavement, often young people find that it may become worse after someone has died.



Grieving people often feel that they have lost their sense of safety and control in life.

# Strategies to manage complex feelings

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## WAYS TO MANAGE ANGER

'Stuffed down feelings' don't disappear. Instead, they can affect us and our relationships in a negative way. Allowing your feelings to happen, whatever they may be, is essential to coping with grief. If you know the reason for your anger, for example, if you have issues about the how your loved one's medical care was managed, or if you feel you should have done more, it is important to discuss this with a trusted adult because sometimes we can have gaps in knowledge and we may need more information that can help us understand the fuller picture.

It is important to try to express intense feelings and not deny them. Being able to

tell someone or even say out loud, "*I am so angry,*" may be all that it takes to soften this intense emotion. Then again, you may need to say, "*I am angry*" and express aloud all the stories and feelings that follow before the feelings can soften.

To fully release anger, you may need to have some safe physical way to express it and find a way that suits you like pounding a pillow, writing a letter, going for a run, engaging in big energy sports, or yelling loudly in the privacy of your bathroom or out in the open somewhere. It's really normal and OK to feel angry but it's important that you express it in a way that is safe for yourself and others.

## DEALING WITH GUILT

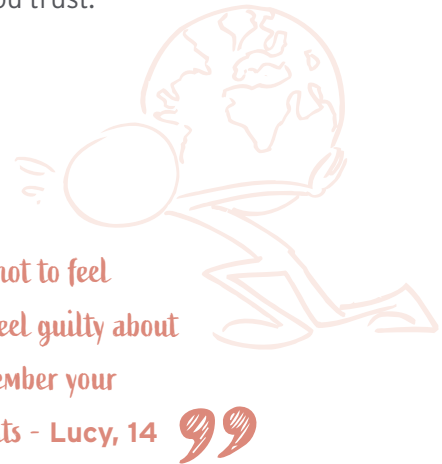


Many people talk about feeling guilty over something said or done or something left unsaid or undone. It is very normal to think you could have done more or behaved differently. Guilt can be seen as anger turned inwards towards yourself. Many young people tell us they feel bad if they feel they didn't get a chance to say goodbye properly, or if they had known that was the last time they were going to see someone they would have behaved differently.

Feelings of guilt can be strong. For example, if you felt anger towards the deceased person whilst they were alive, perhaps for how your life has been disrupted, or felt momentary relief that the sickness is over but then realise the person is also gone.

People also feel guilty because they feel sad mostly over how life has changed in the family and they feel they should be missing the person more.

People can also feel guilty if they forget to think of the deceased person even for a short while and then worry they might forget the person. Time eventually helps soften these intense emotions, and there's no need to feel guilty about starting to feel better. It doesn't mean you're not respecting the person's memory or forgetting about them. Sometimes people feel guilty about something they feel is unspeakable, and they have shame about. Try not to bottle this up, because it can be really hard if we also feel shame on top of what we feel guilty about. Try to speak about it with someone you trust.



“ It's okay to distract yourself from your grief and not to feel guilty that you are forgetting the person. If you feel guilty about certain things especially at the end- try and remember your whole life with the person and not just the bad bits - Lucy, 14 ”

## GROWING YOUR WORLD

Some people find this idea a helpful visual way of looking at grief, particularly if we feel guilty for getting on with our life or alternatively if we feel pressure from other people that we should be feeling better by now.

The ball is our grief. The jar is our world. The first diagram shows how **other** people can feel how our grief **should be**. If the ball is our grief, it shrinks over time.

The bottom diagram shows how grief is in reality for most people after a significant loss. If the ball is grief and the jar is our life, our grief doesn't disappear but our world grows around it. The grief doesn't dominate our world as much we grow stronger and we have new experiences.

Some people think that the goal is to "Get Over" your grief, to have closure. This is a misconception as we don't get over grief. We learn to live with it. We integrate it in to who we are. We heal but things are different.

*“ Sometimes when I feel happy and doing good I feel guilty for being happy and doing good, and that's okay - Layla, 17 ”*

## SHRINKING GRIEF



## GROWING YOUR WORLD



Source *Grieving: A Beginner's Guide* (2006) by Jerusha Hull McCormick. Brewster, MA: Paraclete Press, pp. 114-116

# Coping with anxiety

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Whilst anxiety following a bereavement can feel new and overwhelming, the good news about anxiety is that once you have an understanding of how it works and learn a few tools to help you cope, it can be easier to manage.

There are some simple steps you can take to try to manage this emotion.

## **Learn a little about how anxiety works.**

Anxiety is the mind's response to a fearful situation. Death and loss automatically sets off our fear-responders which releases stress hormones, putting you on alert and heightening physical sensations. Reminding yourself that this is a normal reaction and that it is our body's way of managing stress can help keep you calm.

The good news about anxiety is that once you have an understanding of how it works and learn a few tools to help you cope, it can be easier to manage.



## CHECK IN WITH YOUR GRIEF



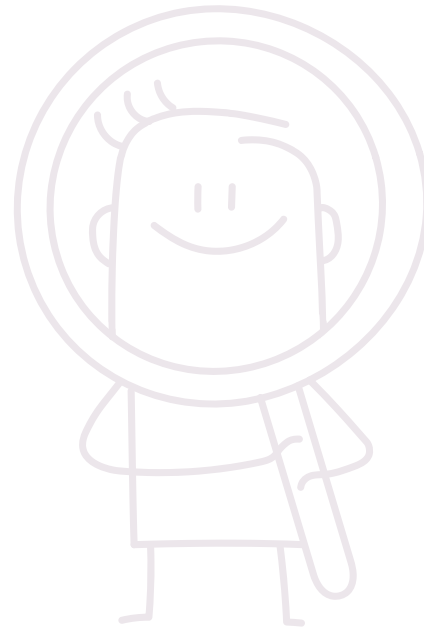
One reason we develop anxiety after a loss is due to unprocessed grief or grief we haven't worked through. Take some time to check in with yourself about your grief.

Are there emotions or memories that you are avoiding out of fear or pain?

**Normalise anxiety:** This means understanding that this difficult emotion is normal and understandable and part of the deal when you are grieving. Telling yourself there is something wrong with you for having a normal emotion does not help you to grieve in a helpful way. Telling yourself that you shouldn't have anxiety is like saying you shouldn't have two eyes.

**Confronting anxiety:** Some people find it hard going out socially and facing the world after a bereavement. They can worry about getting upset in front of people or just not knowing how to be with their friends. Avoidance of painful emotions, people, and places is a common response to anxiety. It makes sense on the face of it. Avoiding something that causes anxiety often provides immediate relief. However,

this relief can be temporary. Consider the long-term consequences of avoidance, such as not wanting to go to school or meet a friend rather than focusing on short-term benefits. When you confront anxiety triggers in a planned way, you can increase confidence in your ability to cope. So try to be compassionate with yourself. Maybe meet one friend to start and maybe make a plan with your family or guidance counsellor for what to do on the more difficult days.



## TALK ABOUT YOUR WORRIES



Often, anxious thoughts occur when there is something left unsaid or questions that you need answers to. It is important to recognize when this is happening and seek out the people that can give you those answers and information. Increasing anxiety can also occur when we are avoiding thinking or talking about our grief. This can lead to us having more things we worry about. Open up to someone you can trust with how you

are feeling. Sharing emotions is an important part of the grieving process. If you find it hard to talk about your feelings or your worries, perhaps you could write them down and maybe share what you feel able with someone you trust, this might be someone outside the family.

Our feelings and worries about our emotions can become a bigger problem if we feel shame for feeling anxious. If we layer shame on top of anxiety we can end up feeling worse.

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## SOME TOOLS TO CALM YOUR ANXIOUS THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

The following describes some strategies to try if you are feeling anxious. Some might suit or work for you better than others. It's especially important to practice these techniques when you are feeling calm, as well as when you are

feeling anxious, so that they become second nature to you and help soothe your anxious thoughts when they are in full flow.

If you are feeling very anxious, try sitting in a chair and just notice things around you. One technique for this is called the 54321 technique.

*“It's important to talk even though it's really hard sometimes it's easier not to talk and isolate but if you talk you can get help - Layla, 17”*

## START BY NAMING IN YOUR HEAD OR OUT LOUD;

5

Look around the room and name 5 things that you can see around you. Notice the details of the objects, what you like or don't like about them.



4

Focus on 4 things that you can touch or feel around you. Notice the different textures and where you feel it in your body, maybe your legs feel the chair or the floor you are on, your hand feels the soft cushion.



3

Listen and name 3 things that you can hear around you. For example, notice background noise like the birds in the trees, or traffic sounds.



2

Notice 2 smells in the room. It might be your shampoo. If you can't find a smell, think of something you like to smell.



1

Think of a taste - either one you have right now or one you like to have.

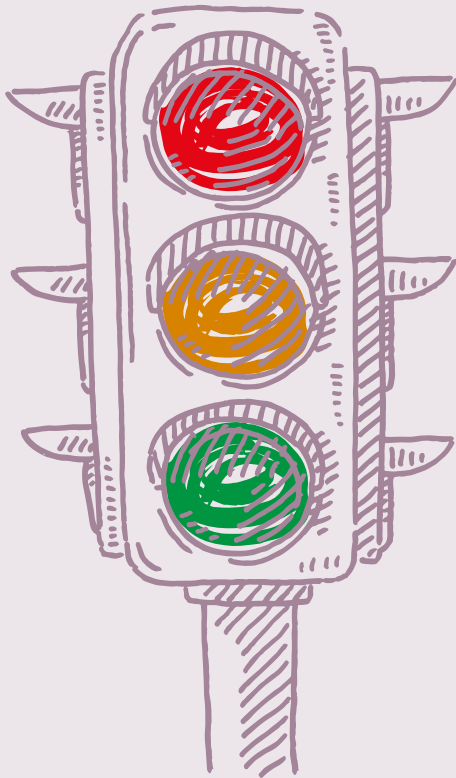


This can help to calm your anxious thoughts by bringing you back to what is around you in the moment and gives you time to figure out what you need to do next.

## TRAFFIC LIGHTS: IDENTIFYING AND CHALLENGING THE ANXIOUS THOUGHTS

By stopping and identifying the worrying thoughts, you can also lower your anxiety levels. When we become anxious our brain

spirals out of control and goes from one anxious thought to another. Often this is called 'catastrophising', we think something dreadful is going to happen. By noticing when the thoughts start we can stop the spiral. We all know what to do at traffic lights.



**RED - STOP:** Interrupt the negative or anxious thoughts. Take some time to notice or write down the thoughts and then...

**AMBER - THINK:** What is the evidence for this thought? What are you already doing? Is this something you need to worry about now? Can you do anything about it? Or do you have to wait and see?

**GREEN- DO:** Deal with the things you need to and then park the thoughts that are not helpful and move on and do something else.

## BREATHING EXERCISE

When we are anxious, it's not uncommon to breathe shallowly, hyperventilate or even unconsciously hold your breath. Practicing deeper breathing gives your brain and muscles more oxygen and can be calming.

BREATHE IN BLUE SKY TO  
**COUNT OF 4**

BREATHE OUT GREY SKY TO  
**COUNT OF 5**



## GROUNDING EXERCISE - A HELPFUL SENTENCE

When you are not feeling anxious, think of a helpful sentence that you could say to yourself to help calm you. For example,

*"I will be ok, I have managed this before and I will be ok now"*

**or**

*"This will pass"*

**or**

*"What's the worst thing that can happen?"*

**or**

*"So what if I cry, I would be totally understanding towards someone else if they were in the same position"*

Ask yourself, "what do I need right now?" It might be to talk to someone or to just be quiet in yourself or if you're in school to take a bathroom break.

When you notice yourself becoming anxious, look at yourself in the mirror and say your sentence out loud. Try and repeat this sentence not just at times of heightened anxiety but when you are feeling calm, so you start to believe it and can access it more easily when you are feeling worried.

## WRITING



Writing down your worries, your thoughts or feelings can be helpful too. Noting the things you are worrying about, or that you keep thinking about, and jotting them down, can feel like a practical way of breaking them down so they don't feel so scary. As you are writing, you might find that suddenly you have ideas about how to fix or manage the things you are concerned about. Some worries might not be fixable, but writing them down or telling them to someone else can really help. Naming your feelings helps you to think about ways you can manage them.

Write down the things you have control over and the things you don't have control over. When you find yourself worrying, take a minute to examine the things you have control over. You can't prevent a storm from coming but you can prepare for it. You can't control how someone else behaves, but you can control how you react or respond.

Recognise that sometimes, all you can control is your effort and your attitude. When you put your energy into the things you can control, you'll be much more effective.



# MY CIRCLE OF CONTROL

I WILL FOCUS ON WHAT I CAN CONTROL



## THINGS THAT ARE OUT OF MY CONTROL

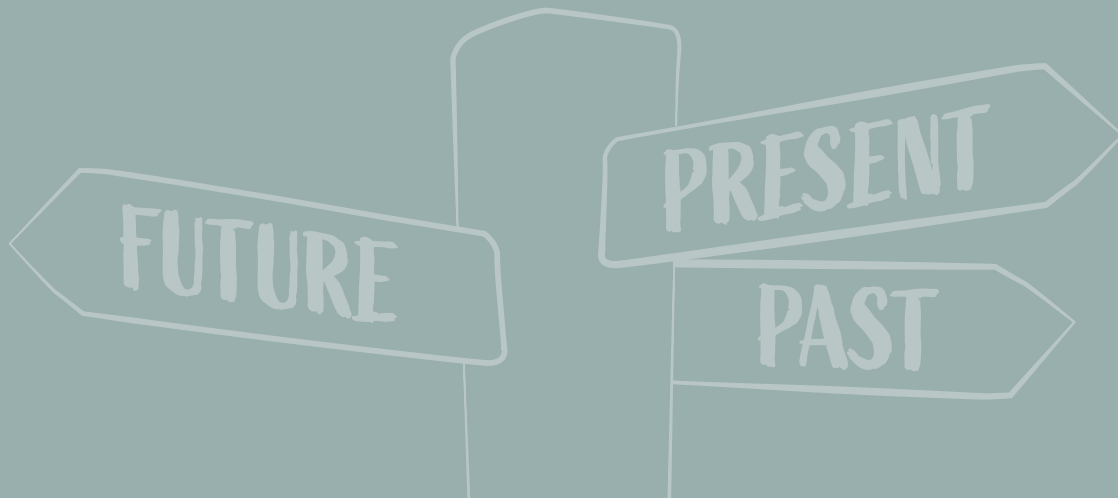
- What other people do
- Other people's choices
- How other people feel
- Things from the past
- What other people say
- How other people respond

# How long does grief last

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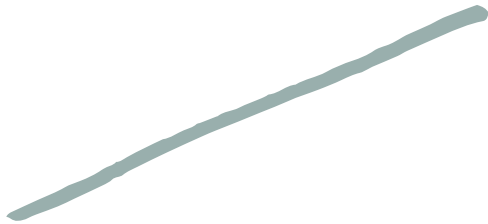
## THE EBB AND FLOW OF GRIEF

- Grief is not something to “get over,” but something we learn to live with. The intense feelings soften over time.
- Special days and important times may cause emotions to resurface. Plan for these events. If we prepare for special events we are less likely to get ambushed by emotions. Think about how you want to remember your special person, maybe light a candle, have special meal, go for a hike, whatever is meaningful to you.
- Part of normal development for a young adult is to reintegrate their loss into their current developmental stage. For example, a secondary school student whose father died when he was younger may wear his deceased father’s shirt to his graduation as a way of remembering him or a bride or groom may propose their first toast to a loved one in their life, at their wedding reception.
- Try not to feel guilty about starting to feel better; you are not disrespecting the persons memory.





WE WOULD LIKE ADJUSTMENT AFTER  
THE DEATH OF SOMEBODY CLOSE TO  
BE LIKE THIS



This diagram can help people to understand that coming to terms with a loss doesn't happen in a set linear way, where there is a beginning and an end and we feel better like in the first diagram. Grief comes in waves. We have good days and bad days, more like the second diagram.

Sometimes bereaved people can worry that they are starting to feel worse, particularly if they had been feeling okay and then they feel bad for a while. This is a very normal part of the grieving process.

HOWEVER, THE PROCESS OF  
ADJUSTMENT IS MORE LIKE THIS



This can sometimes happen if we hear a song or get a particular smell, or something happens out of the blue that reminds us of our loved one and we can feel like we had a setback. We can also struggle more coming up to an anniversary, a birthday or a special event. Remember that coping with bereavement can sometimes feel like 3 steps forward and 2 steps back.

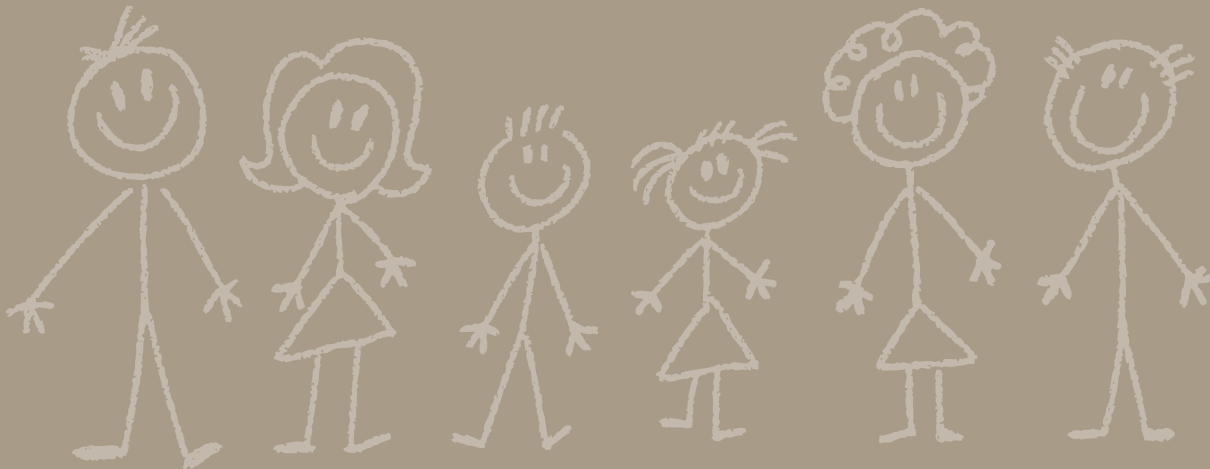
“ Don't be frightened if you feel sad or down - grief comes in waves - Lucy, 14 ”

# Families

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Family members cope with grief at different times and in different ways. The grieving process does not fit into a timetable. Your family members may all react differently to grief. You may find it difficult to see your parents or other family members grieving and not know what to say to them. It can be hard to support each other in families when we are hurting ourselves. We may want to protect each other from pain by not talking

about the deceased. Sometimes this closes down communication in the family when we might feel that talking about the deceased is a “no go area” because we don’t want to cause upset. Remember each family member is grieving a different relationship and has a different way of grieving. Sometimes this leads to tension or misunderstandings in the family.



“ We all grieve differently in the family.

Don't feel guilty if you are consumed with grief and you don't feel you can support others in the family.

It's really important to be aware of this and how we grieve differently otherwise it will affect relationships in the family in a bad way - Áine, 17 ”



# Finding your way through grief

## A MODEL FOR COPING WITH GRIEF

This visual model of coping with grief can be a helpful way of thinking about coping, and moving forward in life. Healthy grieving means living in the world and grieving in the world. It wouldn't be healthy to spend all our time grieving and we can't spend all our time distracting ourselves. Most people experience

grief as a back and forth process, moving between the world of living and the world of grieving. Most of this happens naturally. If there is one thing you take from this model of coping, it is that it's okay to experience grief in doses. We don't have to grieve all the time. We need a break from grief as we need to be able to focus on day to day tasks.



## RELEARNING THE WORLD

Sometimes we talk about having to relearn the world and our place in it after a significant loss.

Our lives can feel totally disrupted, so relearning the world really means finding our way in the world and learning how to be and act in the world without the physical presence of our loved one in it.

There can be many ways in which we feel life has changed. We may have moved school or house. We might feel that our own identity has changed. We may feel that our confidence has been dented and wonder why this happened to us. Our relationships with other family members may have changed. Our parent may now be acting as mother and father in one. Maybe previously you had one parent who was “good cop”, one “bad cop” and now they are good and bad cop rolled into one.

There isn't any way to fix grief. Instead it can be helpful to know that grief is not a passive process. It is an active process of coping and relearning how to act in a world where loss may have transformed our lives.



**“** It's not good to always feel sad, it's ok to distract yourself by interacting with family and friends or playing a sport. I personally like going out to play football to deal with it - Lucy, 14 **”**

## REMEMBERING: CONTINUING BOND



Sometimes after a significant loss we understandably are full of what we have lost.

It is important in time to remember what you gained from having your loved one in your life and to think of the many helpful and healthy ways that you continue to feel connected to them.

There are many ways in which they will always be a part of your life. From ongoing rituals, to honour and remembering someone, to thinking about what advice a loved one would

have given you, to remembering their values and what was important to them. There are countless normal and meaningful ways we maintain bonds.

Many believe they have been given signs that their relatives are looking after them or their spirit is close to them, particularly if they see a symbol like a feather, a butterfly or a robin.

This can give a lot a people comfort and a feeling of still being connected to their loved one. For others this doesn't have any meaning for them at all.



We are who we are because of those whose lives have touched ours. The things you learned from them stay inside you and become a part of you. As time goes on you will realise that no one is completely gone as long as you remember them.

## REMEMBERING THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

As with anything, there are some positive and negative aspects of social media. Because grief can be such a strong emotion, both the positive and negative aspects can be felt in an intense way. Some people find social media a comfort where they can share memories or post to advocate for a cause. Others might find it painful seeing the constant reminders of their loved one or if they see posts about their loved one which are not familiar and different to how you would remember them.










“ Sometimes you have to manage how you use social media so for example for some events I like to share memories but for the big events which are particularly hard like a birthday or mother’s day I turn off my phone as I might get overwhelmed by the messages and I turn it on when I feel ready - Lucy, 14 ”

# Looking after yourself

Grief and anxiety can make looking after yourself difficult. We all need a healthy diet, exercise and sleep to help us to function at our best. If you are finding sleep hard, focus on some small changes. Maybe a warm bath before bed, read a book, listen to some relaxing music, meditate, listen to a podcast. Try cutting off social media for an hour a day.

Make your own self-care kit. These are some examples but make your own.

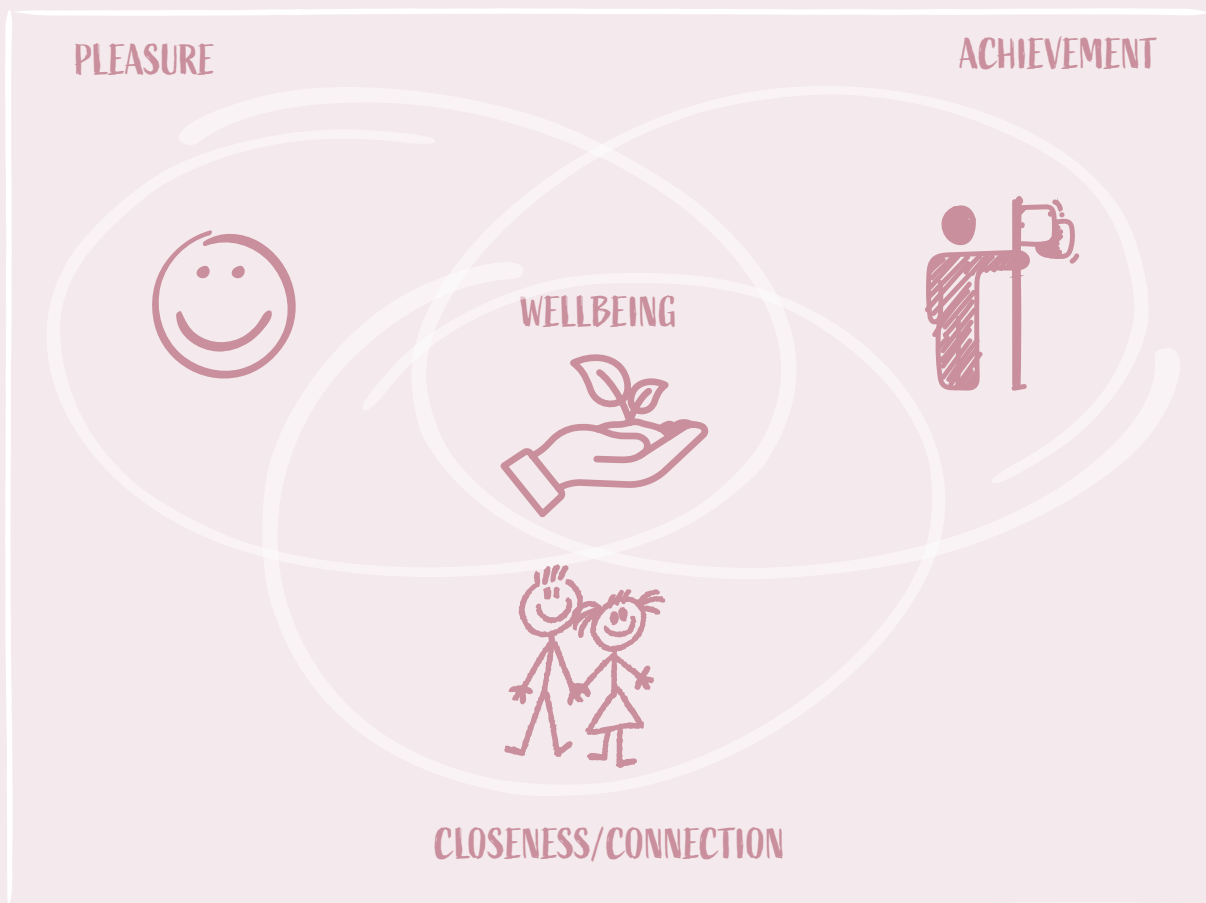
## 7 ITEMS FOR YOUR EMOTIONAL FIRST-AID KIT

- 1 A playlist of songs that uplift and empower 
- 2 An image that soothes and makes you smile 
- 3 Take the dog for a walk 
- 4 A scent you enjoy (try an essential oil) 
- 5 Go for a walk or kick a ball 
- 6 A list of people who love you (as a reminder) 
- 7 A journal or art supplies to process your feelings 



Look after yourself by finding balance. It can be helpful to organise a daily routine between activities that:

- ✔ Give you a sense of achievement
- ✔ Help you feel close and connected
- ✔ Give you a sense of pleasure



## OTHER WAYS TO TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

- Spend time with people you feel comfortable with. Sometimes you want to talk, but sometimes, just being in the company of others who care about you can help.
  - Exercise - it gives you happy endorphins, even just walking.
  - Distract yourself, have fun and do things you enjoy - spend time with friends, go outside, watch a good film.
  - Spend time with your pets.
  - Create your own space. Somewhere to go where you can feel safe or spend time on your own.
  - Choose something that belonged to the person who died, that you can treasure and keep with you. Or create a memory box where you keep photos & things that are special to you and think about all of the good times you had with them.
  - Listen to music that you like and that your special person enjoyed. Make a play list.
- Chatting with others in the same situation can help you remember you are not on your own.
  - Ask for help. This could be from someone at home, at school, your doctor or anyone else you trust.
  - Try Apps that help with anxiety, for example: Calm.com or Headspace.com
  - Try watching a short film made by other bereaved young people:
    - [childhoodbereavement.ie/families-adolescents-and-grief](http://childhoodbereavement.ie/families-adolescents-and-grief)
    - [hopeagain.org.uk](http://hopeagain.org.uk)
    - [childbereavementuk.org/young-peoples-films](http://childbereavementuk.org/young-peoples-films)
  - Try looking at a support website or contacting a support organisation:
    - [childhoodbereavement.ie](http://childhoodbereavement.ie)
    - [dougy.org/grief-support-resources/teens](http://dougy.org/grief-support-resources/teens)
    - [cruse.org.uk/get-help/for-parents/teenagers-understanding-of-death](http://cruse.org.uk/get-help/for-parents/teenagers-understanding-of-death)
    - [childbereavementuk.org](http://childbereavementuk.org)
    - [winstonswish.org](http://winstonswish.org)



# When more support is needed

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A lot of young people get through grief with the support of friends and family. **If you or another young person is struggling with coping with loss, you might need additional support from another adult or someone you trust.** However sometimes people may find it more difficult and need help from someone outside of the family.

Consider seeking additional help if you feel:

- **Self-blame** or **guilt** that doesn't go away
- **Ongoing sadness** that doesn't ease
- **Anxiety that is overwhelming.** If you feel your anxiety is affecting your life to the point where you find it hard to do your usual day-to-day activities

- Feelings of **hopelessness**

You can contact your local hospice or hospital about support. If your relative was cared for by St. Francis Hospice, you can contact us at 01 8327535 (Raheny), 01 8294000 (Blanchardstown) or [bereavement@sfh.ie](mailto:bereavement@sfh.ie).

You should also contact your G.P.:

- If you are involved in risk-taking behaviours, **alcohol or drug abuse**
- If you are **self-harming** or have **unhealthy coping styles**
- If you have **suicidal thoughts.**

“When my Dad died I felt I couldn't talk to people. I let it bottle up and it got on top of me. Because I wasn't talking I didn't really understand how I was feeling and I tried to cope in a very unhealthy way to try and relieve pain which didn't work and I just felt worse. Finally I spoke to my cousin and I then got the help I needed - Karl, 17”

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