

Bereavement

What is grief?

Grief is a normal reaction to loss and bereavement. It is natural to mourn the loss of someone you love and care about.



Grief is *very personal and highly individual* – for everyone it will be a unique experience. There is no right or wrong way to go through grief and for everyone it will be different. It might be helpful to know that there are different aspects of grief people may go through that are normal. These include: denial and disbelief that the death has occurred, anger about what has happened and asking 'why?', bargaining – wanting to change what has happened, sadness – overwhelming sorrow about what has happened, guilt – about past mistakes, acceptance – finding a way to accept what has happened.

Individuals may experience some or all of these feelings and the order in which they do so will vary. These feelings may overlap with each other and there is no set time for how long each aspect will last. Grief is a painful process and its intensity may be dependent on the significance of the relationship with the deceased individual. Grieving involves a complex mix of emotions which will involve sadness, fear, anger, despair, helplessness and disorientation.

Living with grief

There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Any or all of these symptoms are normal. It may help you to talk to someone. Even when you do not feel like being in company, it is important to have the support of others around you as part of your healing process.

You may want to share your experience of grief with others who have been bereaved within your own social networks or your local church or you may want to access local bereavement support groups, telephone support or online forums.

Grieving involves more than coming to terms with the loss of 'the other' – it is also the 'loss of self', especially when your identity has been entwined with the person who has died. Death also makes us face our own mortality and loss make us question the meaning of our own lives.

A personal faith may be a source of comfort and drawing on spiritual activities such as praying, meditating and attending church may offer solace. It is not unusual during times of loss to find yourself questioning your faith and you may find it helpful to talk to a minister or a member of your faith community.

There are physical consequences of grief, including loss of appetite and lack of sleep, fatigue and tiredness. It is important to look after yourself by eating regular meals, exercising and getting enough sleep. Though the sadness of losing someone you love never goes away completely, sometimes people can become stuck in their grief and you may need to seek help from others such as your GP or bereavement counsellor.

The death of a loved one is life-changing. For some people it has significantly shaped their future and given them a deeper appreciation of life, with a new understanding of being able to empathise with others in their pain and suffering.

Will I forget them?

Many people fear that they will forget their loved one in time. This is a normal emotion and a part of adjusting to life after a bereavement. There is growing recognition that people who are bereaved continue to integrate into their life narrative the significant relationships of their lives, even when the person has

died. In this sense there is a continued relationship, and it is natural that you will find yourself talking about them in everyday conversations and remembering them on significant dates, as well as reminders through images you may have of them in photographs, videos and in significant places and objects of meaning.

Grief, remembering and church

Finding a space to sit and be with thoughts and memories can be really important, whether a death has occurred recently or long ago. It doesn't matter if the funeral happened locally or far away, in a crematorium or at a graveside or in a woodland – your local church can provide a really special place of quiet. Some churches are able to offer a place to light candles or to leave prayers, and this is very helpful for many people.

Once a year, in early November, we offer a special service of commemoration. In the first year or so after the death of your loved one you will receive a special invitation. After that please look out for a notice on the St John's noticeboard or website.

Don't be afraid of your feelings Losing a loved one often evokes emotions the survivor has never felt before.

Find support through sharing In the darkness of grief, don't forget that there really are others who care for you if you will let them.

Be patient with yourself Grief is a process that does not end quickly or automatically or even predictably. Be patient and realise that the grief process, while lengthy, ultimately does provide relief.

Seek new routines Try to establish some new routines – the changes need not be radical.

Let yourself feel good again You may have trouble imagining that you could ever feel joy again. Happiness is never a betrayal of love, however. You have a future worth living for and you are allowed to feel a renewed sense of purpose and pleasure in your life.

HOW TO CONTACT US

We are here to help so if you want to talk to someone, please contact us via our Parish Administrator:

Administrator: Lynda Wallace
Address: St John's Anglican Church
94 Bureta Road
Ōtūmoetai,
Tauranga 3110
Phone: 07 576 9923
Email: admin.otumoetai@waiapu.com
Website: www.stjohns-tga.org.nz

Other sources of support and information

Grief Support Services works in the community alongside people feeling the effects of grief in their lives. They are located in Greerton, Tauranga and serve the Western Bay of Plenty region. They provide counselling for children and adults.

(07) 578 4480 admin@griefsupport.org.nz www.griefsupport.org.nz

Skylight supports people of all ages throughout New Zealand who are facing any kind of tough life situation. They specialise in grief, loss and trauma. 0800 299 100 info@skylight.org.nz www.skylight.org.nz

Waipuna Hospice (Tauranga) offer *Riding the Grief Wave Bereavement Support Course* for families who are currently under their care – or have been, no matter how long ago.

07 552 4380 www.waipunahospice.org.nz

Growing through Grief: Seasons for Growth is an Anglican Social Service which provides peer support grief and loss programmes for 6-18 year olds who are missing someone important from their daily life.

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