



# The tasks of grieving

Grief is an individual experience that does not follow one predictable process or series of stages. Grief is an active process that involves the griever engaging with four key tasks.

## Accepting the reality of the loss

Accepting that the life of someone you loved or an important relationship has come to an end can be deeply challenging. It is not uncommon to feel shock or disbelief after learning of the loss, or feel as if you are living in a dream. You may even deny that the loss has taken place in order to protect yourself from intense emotional pain. Rituals such as funerals can help you to come to terms with the reality.

## Processing the pain of grief

Allowing yourself to accept the irreversibility of your loss usually results in intense waves of emotions. These feelings may come on as 'pangs' of grief and are likely to occur unpredictably for months after the death. You may feel sadness, longing, nostalgia, emptiness, anger, numbness, and anxiety.

Some men find it difficult to allow themselves to fully experience these feelings. Tears may be viewed as a sign of weakness and you may seek out distractions. Swinging from one strong emotion

to another can seem frightening and overwhelming but it is a natural process. You are learning to live with the reality of your loss.

Allowing time and space to feel emotion while seeking support will be helpful. You cannot heal unless you express your grief, share it outside of yourself and release it from your body and your mind. It is an exhausting process so finding people who will support you in this process, no matter how long it takes, is important.

Take time to eat well and rest. Avoid people who will tell you to 'move on', 'be strong' or 'keep busy.' They only say this because they are struggling to ease their sense of helplessness in the face of your grief.

Self care is important and there is no timetable to healing. It is okay to grieve at your own pace and in your own time.

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## Adjusting to a world without the person or relationship

You may start to gradually resume your life but you do not 'get over' grief. You learn to live with it as you choose to move forward. You are adjusting to life without someone and this can take a long time.

Sometimes you may feel guilty by getting back to things that you once enjoyed and occasionally forgetting your grief whilst in a happy moment. It's a good sign that you are remembering things that once made you laugh and you are not dishonouring your loved one by picking up your life again.

Adjusting to your life may also involve learning new skills that once were undertaken by your loved one. Be patient with yourself as you learn new roles and let go of old ones. It is natural to feel overwhelmed, resentful and even angry if there are many new responsibilities you know you must take care of. Gradually you will discover new strengths in yourself as you make commitments to your future.

## Finding an enduring connection with your loved one in the midst of embarking on a new life

Being able to hold the memory of your loved one in your heart whilst still going on living is important to help you move forward with your life. You might become less conscious of your loss and find that you have gone through a whole morning without thinking about them. They become part of your life in a way that does not stop you from re-engaging with life.

You may still find that sadness catches you off guard but you are now ready to reinvest your emotions and your energy into other areas of life. Sometimes you invest that energy in other relationships; in other instances you may invest it in something that reflects the memories of the life you once had.

You will have good and bad days but speaking to other men or a member of the TOMNET Professional Support Team is one step towards being heard and supported.

### The TOMNET Centre

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#### Open:

Monday - Thursday 9:00am - 4:00pm  
Friday 9:00am - 3:00pm

FOR IMMEDIATE HELP, call:

**Lifeline 13 11 14**

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**Talk to us. We understand.**

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