



# A story of grief and loss

Harvey had lost his wife Betty six months ago and in his own words he 'wasn't doing so good'. After 42 years of marriage, Harvey still felt every day was empty without her. The pain was relentless even though it had changed. Whilst he had stopped feeling like he wanted to die with her, he suffered through the days, deeply depressed for life the way it used to be. Harvey knew he should probably talk to someone about how he felt.

His daughter had raised it several times but he always changed the subject. The idea of opening up to a stranger about something so personal was impossible to even contemplate. His mates had similar advice. 'Time to move on mate' one of them had said. Harvey knew that moving on wasn't even on his radar. So he started to avoid the card nights, even though they were the one time he could have a laugh and forget. It was too hard to pretend things were okay when they weren't.

Instead Harvey decided he had to work out his own way of coping. He took out a book his daughter had given him on dealing with loss and he opened it for the first time. As he read he realised that the book could have been written for him. For the first time since Betty died, he had words for what he was feeling.

## How you can help yourself

- Understand that grieving can take between 1 and 3 years as you readjust to life, depending on the significance of the loss to you and your life.
- Realise that grief is a unique experience and will be different for everyone.
- When you start to lose the feeling of intense pain when thinking of the person, you are coming out of the other side of grief.
- As you put more emotional energy back into your life you will start to feel less grief-stricken.
- Postponing the grief or avoiding the pain of the loss can result in a build-up of emotions that may result in explosive feelings or deep depression later on.
- Some men find that simply by being older, they now have the time, will and opportunity to deal with their losses and can resolve them in their own way.
- Talk to the TOMNET Professional Support Team about your feelings of grief and loss. We understand.

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## What is grief and loss?

Grief and loss are emotions that everyone will feel at one time or another. Whilst grief and loss are often spoken about in terms of death and dying, this is not the only time you may feel this way. Whenever a bond is formed with someone or something and then broken, you may feel grief and loss. Feeling the loss of something or someone happens in all phases of life.

Some common losses include:

- the loss of a relationship
- employment
- a pet
- health or general wellbeing
- status or a key role, and
- x loss of major hopes and plan

The losses can seem to stack up in older age as life marches on. Facing loss in your life reminds you of the value that these bonds brought to your life and gives you an opportunity to remember how important these things are to us all.

## What is prolonged grief?

Prolonged grief endures over a much longer period of time and does not get easier. You may feel overwhelmed and stuck in your grief forever. You can't help yourself make the necessary changes to your life because of the loss but instead continually interrupt your healing process.

Talking with the TOMNET Professional Support Team is the first step to dealing with prolonged grief. We can give you the support you need to get through this and come out the other side.

**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

 **(07) 4638 9080**

223 Hume St Toowoomba QLD 4350  
PO BOX 7801 Toowoomba QLD 4350

Email: [tomnet05@tomnetinc.org.au](mailto:tomnet05@tomnetinc.org.au)

### 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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