

*Supporting NSW communities,
families and individuals
experiencing loss and grief.*

www.nalag.org.au



NALAG
National Association for
Loss and Grief (NSW) Inc

Helping someone who is grieving

When someone has experienced a loss, there will be big and small adjustments needed to be made in their lives. These could bring uncertainty, frustration, fear, sadness and change as each new day comes along. Grief is about adapting to change in life, thoughts, hopes, beliefs and the future.

Be a good listener

Grieving people need to talk about their loss and acknowledge that they have been through a difficult experience. You can't fix their grief, but you can be there to hear their story and share their journey.

Be a shoulder to cry on

Allow the person to cry with you. Crying helps the release of emotions and improves the healing process.

Be in touch with them

Visit the person or call them. Let them know you've been thinking of them. Write a letter, send an email, remember their special days like birthdays and anniversaries.

Be a friend

Often just being there is all that is needed to support someone who is grieving. Everyone's journey through grief is different and can last a long or short time. Don't be afraid to speak up if you think your friends needs help.

(Adapted from the writings of Doris Zagdanski)

For more information
& referral, please contact:

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Trauma

Responses to Trauma

www.nalag.org.au

Trauma and critical incidents

Any sudden event that causes a person intense emotion can be classified as trauma. Most forms of trauma are unexpected and the person is rarely prepared for the event. Traumatic events can include any form of accident; a hold up, a sudden and unexpected loss or dealing directly with an unpleasant event.

A Critical Incident is any incident or event that is out of the range of normal experience. This can be either a positive or negative experience in highlighting strengths and weaknesses.

What might a person feel

Fear

- of damage to self or someone we love
- of being left alone
- of “breaking down” or “losing control”
- of similar things happening again.

Helplessness

- can leave people feeling very helpless

Sadness

- for death, injuries, loss
- Longing for life to return to normal

Guilt

- for being better off than others
- for action not taken or concern for action that has been taken

Shame

- for being helpless, emotional or needing others.
- for not reacting the way one wished.

Anger

- at what happened

- over the injustice and senselessness.
- at shame and feeling helpless.
- WHY ME?

Memories

- of feelings of loss of love
- for others who have been injured or died.
- of like events.

Let down

- Disappointments

Hope

for better times

Other Reactions May Include

- Feeling numb and/or inadequate
- Trouble sleeping
- Your eating habits may change
- Nightmares and intruding thoughts are also common
- Finding it hard to make decisions
- Difficulty in focusing and concentrating
- Lapses in memory
- Difficulty in breathing, feeling tense and sick
- Heightened responses
- Muscular tension and pain
- Sometimes a loss of interest in pleasurable things such as sex
- Feeling constantly tired and depressed.

Effects on Family and Social Relationships

Trauma can strengthen friendships through the common experience. It can also isolate people from others as they feel no-one really understands them.

What Can Help

Your reactions to an event is normal though painful and difficult. Here are some other

suggestions:

- Alternate periods of physical activity and relaxation.
- Supplement your diet with Vitamins C, B2, B6, Calcium and Magnesium.
- Keep yourself busy by structuring your time.
- Keep your life as normal as possible.
- Make as many daily decisions as feel you can control.
- Don't make any big life changes.
- Spend time with others but allow yourself time to think and feel.
- Talk it out.
- Give yourself time to get over the event and to feel rotten.
- Be kind to yourself.
- Do things that make you feel good.
- Keep a journal.
- Remember your reactions are normal and don't feel that you are crazy.

What To Watch Out For:

- Overuse of drugs or alcohol.
- Undertake tasks with more care especially driving.
- If you are becoming isolated ask for help.

If these things continue to affect you severely or go on for a prolonged period without easing, you may need to seek help from a professional.

NALAG is here to assist. There are others such as counsellors, psychologists and social workers who can be found in the phone book. For kids there is the Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 For adults Lifeline: 13 1114