



Ballarat Hospice Care Inc. (Ballarat Hospice) offers support to people who are bereaved following the death of a patient who has received care through our service. Not everyone wants or needs grief counselling, everyone is different. If you feel that talking to someone may help you, please contact us on 53331118 to arrange a time to meet with a member of the Supportive Care Team.

Because of the uniqueness of our individual relationship with the person who has died, every person experiences grief differently. It is useful to remember that all responses are **normal** to an **abnormal** situation.

## **Grief is different for everyone, but some of the reactions may include**

**Feelings** – shock, numbness, anger, sadness, fear, anxiety, loneliness, guilt, helplessness

**Thoughts** – confusion, dreams, disbelief, wondering “what if”, poor concentration

**Behaviours** – lethargy or overactivity, sleeplessness or overwhelming tiredness, desire to resort to alcohol or non-prescribed drugs and other potentially harmful behaviours

**Physical reactions** – tiredness, loss of appetite, diarrhoea, constipation, vomiting and pain

**Social effects** – relationships with others may change

Grief can feel anything but normal, but it's vital to have realistic and achievable expectations of adjusting to this major life event. We offer one-to-one support as well as small groups that allow people to meet in a safe and supported environment with an experienced facilitator.

## **What is grief?**

Grief is how we respond when we experience a significant change or loss. It can feel like being lost in a maze of conflicting and intense emotions. It sometimes brings a sense of losing control. Grief is not static, it ebbs and flows. The purpose of grief is to enable us to adjust to our loss, to integrate that loss into our lives and to eventually make new meanings in our world. Life will not be the same.

Grief has no timetable or set pattern. Eventually you can learn to live with this experience because its intensity will gradually ease.

## **Some of the following suggestions may help you**

- Choose a good listener if you need to talk.
- Be patient and don't expect too much of yourself.
- Understand that grief reactions change frequently and vary enormously.
- Trust yourself to know what you need and do what is right for you.
- Accept that you may need to explain to others what your grief is like.
- Do not make big decisions too soon.
- Medication alone cannot cure or help you to avoid grief but it may assist in the treatment of depressive illness.
- Grief takes time; some days you will just exist until better days gradually come along.