



Canadian Mental
Health Association
British Columbia
Mental health for all

GRIEF



Plainer language series

Grief is the normal mix of thoughts, feelings and actions that happens when you lose something.

- You might feel worried, sad or angry. You might even feel relieved at times.
- You might feel empty, like you have no feelings. You might feel disconnected from everything around you.
- You might think that things will never get better. You might wonder what you could have done differently.
- You might act out or have a hard time doing much at all.

If you are thinking about ending your life, call 1-800-SUICIDE. It stands for 1-800-784-2433. If you think that a loved one is in danger, call 9-1-1.

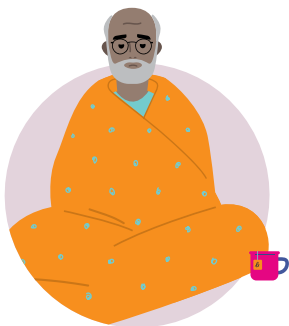
Grief can have some of the same signs as depression, but grief and depression are not the same. For some people, grief can bring on or worsen depression. If you feel like it is hard to get through the day, it is a good idea to talk to a doctor or a mental health professional like a counsellor.

Everyone feels grief when they lose someone or something important, but everyone grieves differently and each time of grief is also different. There is no right or wrong way to grieve.

WHY DO PEOPLE FEEL GRIEF?

People may grieve when they:

- Lose a loved one
- Lose a pet
- Lose a way of life, like losing a job or ending a relationship
- Lose something familiar to them like ties to their culture or homeland
- Lose health, like when they are sick or hurt
- Lose something they own that was important to them
- Expect to lose someone or something, like when a loved one is very sick.



HOW DOES GRIEF AFFECT HEALTH?

Grief can have a big impact. The strong feelings around grief can lead to mental health problems or make mental health problems worse. Grief can also make it harder to deal with other stresses in your life. Some people experience physical signs of grief like fatigue, poor appetite, or sleep problems.

WHEN SHOULD I FIND EXTRA HELP?

Grief is natural. It usually gets better over time. But some people need extra help to get them through a difficult time. Here are signs that show you might need extra help:

- You feel hopeless or feel like things can never get better
- You cannot take care of yourself or others
- You spend a lot of time thinking about death or suicide (ending your own life)
- You use unhealthy ways to cope with grief, like drinking alcohol or using drugs
- You notice signs of depression or other mental health problems

If you think you need extra help dealing with grief, talk to a doctor. Your doctor can help you find the right professional.

Asking for help does not mean you are weak. It means you know that you feel unwell and want to do something about it.



Where can I learn more about grief?

Talk to a doctor if you are having problems with grief. You can also try these resources:

BC Bereavement Helpline

Talk to someone at the BC Bereavement Helpline. Bereavement is another word for grief. You can talk to someone who is trained to help with grief. They can also help you find help in your community. For the English-language phone service call 1-877-779-2223. It is a free call. The BC Bereavement Helpline website has free brochures and other information on grief. You can also find a support group in your area. Visit www.bcbh.ca.

BC Mental Health Support Line

This phone service can help you when you are worried, stressed or upset. They can help with a lot of other problems, too. They can help you find services in your community. You can also call if you just need to talk to someone. Call 310-6789 (do not add an area code) any time of day or night. You can talk to someone right away. Translators can help you in many different languages. Say the name of the language you need in English to get an interpreter.

This booklet was written by the Canadian Mental Health Association's BC Division. It is based on current research and resources. We also check key facts with doctors and other mental health experts. Please contact us if you want to know what resources we used.

Founded in 1918, CMHA is a national charity that helps maintain and improve mental health for all Canadians.

bc.cmha.ca

