

Coping with the loss of a loved one is always difficult, especially when it is not expected. It can take time to understand your feelings and adjust after the loss has happened, but there are things you can do help yourself cope.

- Understand the grief process:
 - Grief can be painful and exhausting but most people find that in time things become easier.
 - Understanding the grief process and the common stages of the grief cycle can be really helpful so it can be a good idea to familiarise yourself with these and keep them in mind during the periods when difficult feelings come up.
 - Take each day at a time. There may be good days and bad days. Try to focus on each day at a time and set yourself small, achievable goals.
 - Develop coping strategies that work for you. Self-help resources, such as Moodjuice, can help you to work through difficult feelings and learn coping skills.
 - Make a memory box. You might find it helpful to fill a box with items which prompt happy memories of the person who died, as these can help lift your mood, when you feel down. The box can contain anything that is meaningful and helpful to you, for example a favourite book, quotes, photos, letters, poems, notes to yourself, a cuddly toy, a perfume, or a smell that's important to you.
 - Learn your triggers. It is normal for certain things to trigger difficult feelings or painful memories about the loss. By taking note of what causes your mood to change, you can gradually learn how best to cope with triggers when they happen. You can try tracking your feelings using an online mood diary. There are many freely available, such as MoodPanda.
- Connect with others:
 - Let others know how you are feeling. Tell people what you find helpful and let them know when you are finding things difficult. It is okay to ask others to be with you if you need them.
 - Seek support. It can be helpful to talk with others who are also currently coping with a loss or have experienced grief in the past. Contact your local Mind to find out what peer support is available locally. You can also access peer support via online communities, such as Elefriends.
- Talk to a therapist:
 - Talk with a trained professional can help you become more aware of and address your thoughts and feelings following a loss.
 - It can be useful to have a continuous focused source of support that goes beyond the level of support that friends or family may be able to provide.
 - Talking to a specialist grief counsellor may be appropriate and could help you with understanding the grieving process, identifying and expressing your feelings relating to the loss, exploring ways of coping, moving towards acceptance, coping with birthdays and anniversaries of the loss.
- Look after your wellbeing:
 - Following a loss it is natural to feel like your whole life has been disrupted.
 - This may mean that you experience disrupted sleep (sleeping too much or too little), eating unhealthily or for some people using substances like alcohol or drugs in an attempt to numb difficult feelings, all of which are likely to make your mental health poorer.

- It can be helpful to try to get enough sleep, learn how to relax before bed, making sure your bedroom is a calm place and as clear of distractions as possible.
- Eating regular healthy meals can make a big difference to your overall sense of wellbeing.
- Avoid drugs and alcohol as they tend to make it difficult in the longer term to manage feelings and find ways to help to cope.



Accessible Information

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