

**Occupational Health, Safety
and Wellbeing Services**

Bereavement and Loss



Coventry City Council

www.coventry.gov.uk/ohsw

The Concept of Loss

Loss can be described as separation from someone or something that we consider is an important part of our lives. This may be the death of a loved one, or the loss of an important aspect of our lives, some of which are:

- A radical change to our lives
- Loss of job, status or home
- Loss of limb or vital organ
- Loss of spouse through separation or divorce and many more.

Grief is a normal process

Everyone who faces a loss will experience some or all of the following feelings:

- Shock and numbness
- Sadness
- Anger
- Guilt
- Loneliness
- Anxiety
- Feelings of helplessness

There may be physical symptoms accompanying these feelings such as:

- Sleeplessness
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite
- Absent mindedness
- Crying
- Withdrawing from normal activities

However, loss needs to be faced up to and worked through if we are to adjust to loss. Grief and mourning are part of all our lives and are a natural process. It may be helpful to look at this process in stages:-

Accepting what has happened

However painful, we must face up to the fact that the person we loved, or the situation we took for granted, has gone. Shock is a natural reaction to this and numbness helps us to survive the first emotional impact of the loss. We often hear people say this can not be happening to me, but to deny what has happened is not helpful.



If you would like an appointment to see a counsellor please ask your manager/HR to make a referral.

Let yourself feel the loss

It is OK to cry. Do not bottle up your feelings. Well meaning friends and relations may feel distressed to see you crying, but this is quite a normal reaction to what has happened to you and you should allow yourself to feel your sorrow.

Learning to live with the loss

An important part of healing is trying to get back into a normal routine. This stage should not be rushed, but taking part in normal activities helps us adjust to a life without the person we loved or the important loss in our lives.

Normal household activities, getting back to work, taking up a new activity, all help us to feel part of life again.

Maintain important friendships as feelings of loneliness can overwhelm us. Talk about your feelings with someone you trust. Talk to other people who have experienced loss.

Special occasions, anniversaries, favourite items, sayings or places may evoke strong memories and emotions attached to a person or thing from time to time. This is quite normal.

Making new relationships

Getting over the loss of a loved one does not mean forgetting them. No one enjoys the pain of loss, but it is a natural part of our lives that we learn to love again. Gradually the pain of the loss is replaced by sweet memories of the loved one and we begin to talk quite naturally about them and to feel life is worth living again.

No one is ever the same person after experiencing a significant loss. It is not uncommon to hear that the experience of a loss can cause individuals to look at life and events in a different way.

Pain and loss are as much a part of life as joy and happiness. We live in a society where we do not talk about this experience, but it would be helpful if we did!

Most people seek help at this important stage in their lives, from friends and relatives, their doctor, religious leader, community leader, or a counsellor and it is OK to do so!

A sympathetic and understanding helper is a vital part of a good recovery from loss.

Useful Telephone Numbers

CRUSE Bereavement Care

Local Contact: 024 7667 0714

AGE Concern

Local Office 024 7623 1999

SANDS:

Stillbirth & Neonatal Death Society

Helpline: 020 7436 5881

(Monday – Friday 9.30am – 4.30pm)

Macmillan Nurses

(based at Walsgrave Hospital)

Local Contact: 024 7696 6052

The Samaritans

Local Contact: 024 7667 8678

Compassionate Friends

Help for bereaved parents

Helpline: 0115 926 4701

Further information:

Occupational Health, Safety & Wellbeing Service

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