
Grief – support services

Summary

- Everyone experiences the pain associated with grief at some time in their life.
 - Support from family and friends is important.
 - Help is available. Community organisations, agencies and groups often provide grief support services.
 - The opportunity to talk things over with a trained counsellor can help you make sense of your feelings.
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Grief is our response to loss. Everyone will experience loss at some stage in life. The death of a loved one is a particularly difficult experience for many people. Grief support services provide counselling, support and education to bereaved individuals, children and families. The opportunity to talk things over with a trained counsellor can help you make sense of your feelings.

Grief can be triggered by different experiences

The death of a family member, friend or other close person can trigger grief.

A number of other experiences can also cause feelings of loss and grief. These experiences might include:

- separation, divorce or relationship breakdown
- loss of possessions through disaster or theft
- children leaving home
- passing your child(ren) into someone else's care
- unemployment, retrenchment or retirement
- death of a pet
- infertility, stillbirth, miscarriage or abortion
- the loss of a person who is missing.

Support is important when you're grieving

People who are well supported by family and friends are less likely to suffer poor health as a consequence of bereavement and loss. However, some grieving people may also benefit from professional grief support and counselling.

Bereavement counselling for grief

Grief support services provide counselling, support and education to bereaved individuals, children and families. The opportunity to talk things over with other a trained counsellor can help you make sense of your feelings.

Counsellors can offer you encouragement, support and advice through the grieving process. They will not tell you what to do or how you should be feeling, but they may put forward ideas and strategies to help you cope.

Support can help you cope with grief

Grief support services aim to:

- assist and guide people through the grieving process
- help with complicated grief issues to prevent physical and mental health problems occurring.

Support is available in most communities

Community organisations, agencies and groups are often involved in grief support services. These organisations

may include:

- hospitals and community health centres
- palliative care agencies
- volunteer groups
- church and religious organisations.

Specialist services for grief

There is a range of specialist grief support services available. For example, if you have experienced the death of a child or baby, assistance is available from Red Nose (previously SIDS and Kids) or SANDS (Stillbirth and Neonatal Death Support).

There are also grief support groups for families of people who have taken their own life, victims of homicide and people experiencing trauma as a result of road accidents. Sometimes specialist services are established in response to a particular traumatic event or disaster such as a bushfire or flood.

Services for children who are grieving

Children can experience loss and grief from a very young age. Their feelings might be triggered by the death of a parent or close relative, family separation, the death or loss of a pet or many other situations.

The **Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement (ACGB)** is funded by the Victorian Government to provide a statewide specialist bereavement service for individuals and families who need help following the death of someone close to them. This service operates throughout Victoria, and provides a range of bereavement support programs for both children and adults, including face to face counselling and support groups. Telephone or online counselling (by appointment) is also available to clients in more remote areas.

ACGB also runs a **Kids Grieve Too** bereavement support group program designed for children aged from six to 14 years who have experienced the death of someone significant in their lives.

Kids Helpline offers a confidential 24-hour counselling service for children and young adults aged from five to 25 years. They can call from anywhere in Australia for free on 1800 551 800.

Where to get help

- Your **GP (doctor)**
- Your local community health centre, hospital or palliative care service
- A trained bereavement counsellor
- **NURSE-ON-CALL** Tel. **1300 60 60 24** – for expert health information and advice (24 hours, 7 days)
- **Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement** – bereavement counselling and support services Tel. **(03) 9265 2100** or **1800 642 066**
- **The Compassionate Friends Victoria** – grief support after the death of a son, daughter, brother or sister Tel. **(03) 9888 4944** or **1300 064 068**
- **Mercy Grief Services** – for people living in the western region of Melbourne Tel. **(03) 9313 5700**
- **Hope Bereavement Care** – for people living in the Barwon region Tel. **(03) 4215 3358**
- **Kids Helpline** – telephone counselling Tel. **1800 551 800** (24 hours, 7 days)
- **Lifeline** – crisis support and suicide prevention services Tel. **13 11 14** (24 hours, 7 days)
- **MensLine Australia** – 24 hours, 7 days Tel. **1300 789 978**
- **Parentline Victoria** – 8 am to 12 midnight, 7 days a week, Tel. **13 22 89**
- **SuicideLine Victoria** Tel. **1300 651 251** – for counselling, crisis intervention, information and referral (24 hours, 7 days)
- **GriefLine Community and Family Services Inc.** – loss and grief telephone counselling service, 12 noon to 3 am, 7 days a week Tel. **(03) 9935 7400** or **1300 845 745**
- **Red Nose** (formerly SIDS and Kids Victoria) – 24 hours a day, seven days a week, Tel. **1300 308 307**

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- **SANDS** (Miscarriage, stillbirth and newborn death support) Tel. **(03) 9899 0217** or 1300 0 SANDS
- **Very Special Kids** (Bereavement Support Program) Tel. **(03) 9804 6253** or **1800 888 875**
- **Victims of Crime Helpline** Tel. **1800 819 817**
- **Road Trauma Support Services Victoria** Tel. **(03) 8877 6900** or **1300 367 797**
- **Support After Suicide** Tel. **(03) 9421 7640**

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Australian Centre for Grief and Bereavement

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