

Bereavement Toolkit

Please look after yourself as you go through this guidance.
This topic may be distressing. You may choose to go through it with a family or staff member at a time that is best for you. Sources of support are included on the last slide.

For further support or questions contact
Charlotte Anderton, College Counsellor: can@ndonline.ac.uk



Everyone experiences grief differently based on:

Your living environment

The type of death

Your support systems

Your personal resilience and ability to manage feelings

Access to funerals and group memorials.

The type of relationship you had with the person who died



Grief in Teens

The teenage brain goes through a huge amount of change; developing abstract thought, emotional regulation and risk management. Understanding and processing death and grief on top of all this can be hard. You may question everything about your life.

You might feel:

- Reluctant to ask for help, not want to 'burden' others
- Like you have to be 'grown up' and not show it
- Try to protect others and feel worried about them

Friends often report not knowing what to say or how to support someone who is grieving, they are trying their best. Friendships sometimes become strained, however, they are often the biggest source of comfort.

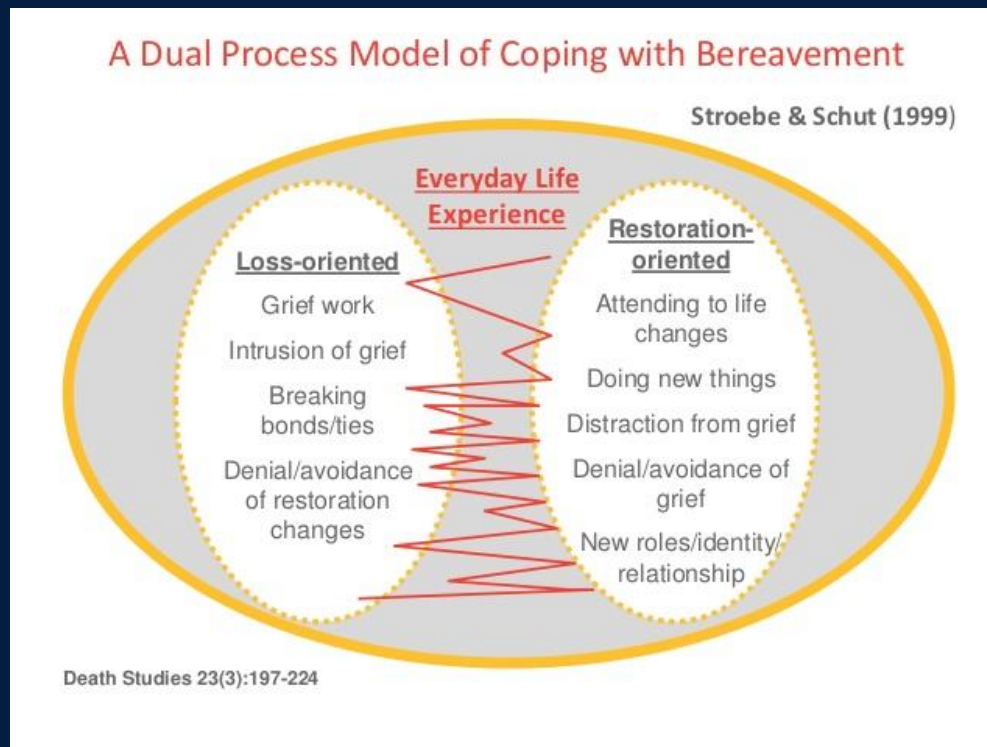
The pressures of studying and goals of university or employment might be more difficult now or disrupted completely. Sharing problems and being kind to yourself can help.

If the death is of a parent or caregiver, living arrangements, financial situation, responsibilities etc may all change very suddenly and this can feel unsettling.

Being able to talk openly about death and grieving can be a huge support. This might be a friend, family, teacher or counsellor. That person will be different for each of us.

Puddle Jumping

It is normal to 'puddle jump' back and forth between grief and thriving.
It does not mean that you are forgetting the loved one or that you don't care.
It is part of starting to adjust to life with grief whilst continuing to live.
'It is ok to be ok, and it is ok to not be ok!'



Growing around your grief

Your grief is unlikely to disappear, you learn to grow around your grief and you feel more able to live with it as time goes on.

Tonkin's Model of Grief

Growing around grief

Your life

Time



Source: Cruise Bereavement Care

Why talk to someone in college about it?

- Communication – acknowledgement of the death and the emotional impact on you and your community.
- A chance to talk about the person who died; this may be difficult to do at home.
- Reassurance – That grieving is normal and healthy.
- Guidance – on how to manage the feelings and communicate them to others.
- Signposting - to websites and additional support, like counselling.



In college you can talk to teachers, Achievement tutors, the safeguarding team, college counsellor or go to a Mindmate support drop-in.

Practical things to do:

Participate in the funeral or remembrance by finding a reading or making a music list for the wake

Make a photograph slide show or digital photo montage

Plant Seeds or a tree

Talk to your priest, imam or religious leader

A college memorial book

Co-create a poem

Make a memories scrap book

A group project

Express feelings through a diary or letter writing

Talking about the person that died

Focus on what can be controlled for a short time e.g. cleaning your room, baking, exercise.

Supporting someone who is grieving:

- Be open and honest. There are over 100 euphemisms for death. It is ok to use the direct words 'died' and 'death'. Most bereaved people appreciate honest communication but if someone prefers to use other words then follow their lead.
- Language can be particularly important if the bereavement is through suicide. Using phrases like 'died by suicide' or 'took their own life' are more considerate.
- Listen
- Clarify any misconceptions. For example, someone may fear that they didn't do enough or it was their fault. They may be confused about what a funeral involves. If you don't have answers to their questions you could look for information together or look on websites and other resources. The ND wellbeing Hub has links to services.
- Don't judge or assume. Some people may not begin to grieve straight away or cry; they may be angry or quiet, this is ok.
- Don't force the issue. Make the offer of support and let them come to you when they need to. Remind them you are there if they need to talk.

Resources

National Bereavement Charities:

Cruse

www.cruse.org.uk

Hope again (teens and children)

www.hopeagain.org.uk/

Child Bereavement UK

www.childbereavementuk.org

Leeds Suicide Bereavement Service

www.leedssbs.org.uk

Bereavement and Covid 19:

<https://www.cruse.org.uk/get-help/coronavirus-dealing-bereavement-and-grief>

Book:

The Grieving Teen: A Guide for Teenagers and Their Friends (2000)

by Helen Fitzgerald (Several copies are in the library)