

*For Information & Referral
Please Contact*

NALAG
Dubbo Centre
for Loss & Grief

Welchman Street
DUBBO NSW 2830



02 6882 9222



02 6884 9100



nalag@hwy.com.au



NALAG
Dubbo Centre for Loss & Grief
PO Box 379
DUBBO NSW 2830

www.nalag.org.au

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Be a good listener

Grieving people need to talk about their loss, acknowledge that they have been through a difficult experience. You can't fix their grief but you can be there, hear their story, and to share their journey.

Be a shoulder to cry on

Allow them to cry with you, crying helps the release of emotions and this helps with healing.

Be in touch with them

Drop in, call on the telephone and say "I was thinking of you today" write a letter, send an email, remember special days like Christmas, birthdays and anniversaries.

When someone has experienced a loss, there will be big and small adjustments to be made in their lives. These could bring uncertainty, frustration, fear, sadness and change as each new day comes along. Grief is about adapting to change in life, thoughts, hopes, beliefs and the future.

Be a friend

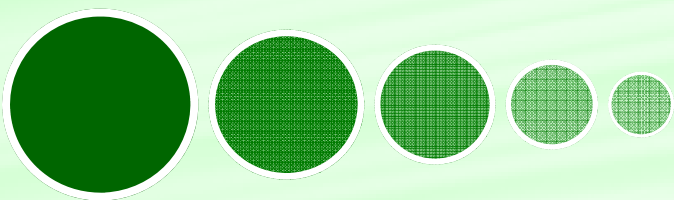
Often being there is all that is needed to support someone who is grieving.

(Adapted from the writings of Doris Zagdanski)

Trauma

Responses to Trauma





Trauma and critical incidents

Any sudden event that causes a person intense emotion can be classified as trauma.

Most forms of trauma are unexpected and the person is rarely prepared for the event.

Traumatic events can include any form of accident, a hold up, a sudden and unexpected loss, dealing directly with an unpleasant event.

A Critical Incident is any incident or event that is out of the range of normal experience. This can be either a positive or negative experience in highlighting strengths and weaknesses.

What might a person feel

Fear

- of damage to self or someone we love
- of being left alone
- of “breaking down” or “losing control”
- of similar things happening again.

Helplessness

- can leave people feeling very helpless.

Sadness

- for death, injuries, loss
- Longing for life to return to normal

Guilt

- for being better off than others
- for action not taken or concern for action that has been taken.

Shame

- for being helpless, emotional or needing others.
- for not reacting the way one wished.

Anger

- at what happened, at whatever or who ever caused the event.
- over the injustice and senselessness.
- at shame and feeling helpless.
- WHY ME?

Memories

- of feelings of loss of love
- for others who have been injured or died.
- of like events.

Let down

- Disappointments

Hope

- for better times

Other Reactions May Include

- Feeling numb and or inadequate
- Trouble sleeping
- Your eating habits may change
- Nightmares and intruding thoughts are also common
- You may find it hard to make decisions
- Difficulty in focussing and concentrating
- Have lapses in memory
- Have difficulty in breathing, feeling tense and sick
- You may have heightened responses and feel constantly tired
- You may also have muscular tension and pain
- Sometimes there is a loss of interest in pleasurable things such as sex
- Generally people may feel constantly tired and depressed.

Effects on Family and Social Relationships

Trauma can strengthen friendships through the common experience. It can also isolate people from others as they feel no-one really understands them. Little things may irritate you and cause stress and blowups.

What Can Help

Your reactions to an event is normal though painful and difficult. Here are some other suggestions:

- Alternate periods of physical activity and relaxation.
- Supplement your diet with Vitamins C, B2, B6, Calcium and Magnesium.
- Keep yourself busy by structuring your time.
- Keep your life as normal as possible.
- Make as many daily decisions as feel you can control.
- Don't make any big life changes.
- Spend time with others but allow yourself time to think and feel.
- Talk it out.
- Give yourself time to get over the event and to feel rotten.
- Realise that others are stressed as well.
- be kind to yourself.
- Do things that make you feel good.
- Keep a journal.
- Remember your reactions are normal and don't feel that you are crazy.

What To Watch Out For:

- Do not overuse drugs or alcohol.
- Undertake tasks with more care especially driving.

If you are becoming isolated ask for help.

If these things continue in severity to affect you or go on for a prolonged period without easing you may need to seek help from a professional.

NALAG is here to assist. There are others such as counsellors, psychologists and social workers who can be found in the phone book. For kids there is the Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 For adults Lifeline: 13 1114

