

**Supporting NSW communities,
families and individuals
experiencing loss and grief.**

www.nalag.org.au



NALAG
National Association for
Loss and Grief (NSW) Inc

Helping someone who is grieving

When someone has experienced a loss, there will be big and small adjustments needed 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 good listener

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

Be a shoulder to cry on

Allow the person to cry with you. Crying helps the release of emotions and improves the healing process.

Be in touch with them

Visit the person or call them. Let them know you've been thinking of them. Write a letter, send an email, remember their special days like birthdays and anniversaries.

Be a friend

Often just being there is all that is needed to support someone who is grieving. Everyone's journey through grief is different and can last a long or short time. Don't be afraid to speak up if you think your friends needs help.

(Adapted from the writings of Doris Zagdanski)

**For more information
& referral, please contact:**

**NALAG Head Office
02 6882 9222**

info@nalag.org.au

**PO Box 379
DUBBO NSW 2830**

NALAG BRANCHES:

MUDGEE

HUNTER

GRIEF SUPPORT

GREATER SYDNEY

www.nalag.org.au

The Silent Sorrow of Disenfranchised Grief

www.nalag.org.au

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Silent Sorrow

The contained grief of an unacknowledged loss is a heavy burden to carry alone. The ache and the pain of a connection that is not publicly or socially acknowledged remains trapped in a kaleidoscope of emotions, not expressed or verbally articulated until recognised and validated. The energy required to keep feelings hidden and emotions contained is exhausting.

There are many and varied examples of unacknowledged grief throughout a lifespan – from the disappointment and sorrow of miscarriage to the loss of physical capacity or function; to the transitions of later life or the care of others throughout life.

Feelings of guilt, frustration, anger and resentment, as well as the devastating sense of loss of self can be overwhelming leaving a person feeling totally alone and isolated in their grief. Often the high expectations of self has been compromised, impacting on our sense of identity, our vision of the future and our meaning and purpose in life.

The lack of acknowledgment by others infers a lack of entitlement to grieve and fails to validate one's feeling of lost connection and the secondary losses that ripple out across all aspects of life.

The need for recognition, and the associated support that recognition often brings, can validate and honour our sense of loss and support our process of grief, our

adaptation to a world that has changed. That support can progress a vision of a changed future and re-establish the reality and hope for a future.

- Firstly, acknowledge for yourself the loss you have experienced, the massive change that has impacted all aspects of your life.
- The kaleidoscope of emotions you have been experiencing are legitimate
- There are no "good" or "bad" emotions
- They are all just emotions and all part of the human experience
- Emotions are our body's way of communicating

Grief is a physical and physiological process in the body requiring a response.

When we are grieving, we are at a higher risk to our health status – self-care needs to be a priority.

Remind yourself that we cannot always be in control of outcomes.

Seek support – from friends, family, colleagues or professional grief support.

Self-care and social support become paramount at this time if you are to progress through this journey and exit intact.

Do your best to handle what is within your control. Leave the rest.

You are enough!

Disenfranchised Grief

- Can have a sudden impact – as in miscarriage or failed IVF
- Can be traumatic – as in a workplace accident
- Can be ongoing – such as for carers of a disabled child or the chronically ill
- Can be anticipated – for carers in the context of aged or dementia care

What to do if you can identify with some of these things or perhaps know someone living in a state of "silent sorrow"

Remember the major need is to acknowledge the situation:

- The person's loss
- The grief that is probably contained internally

You can also:

- Offer support through understanding, listening and being genuinely present when required
- Find a counsellor or make a call to access support
- Find a GP you can talk to and who suits your needs
- Seek out people and places that make you feel good and help you to refocus.

For more information on NALAG services, visit www.nalag.org.au