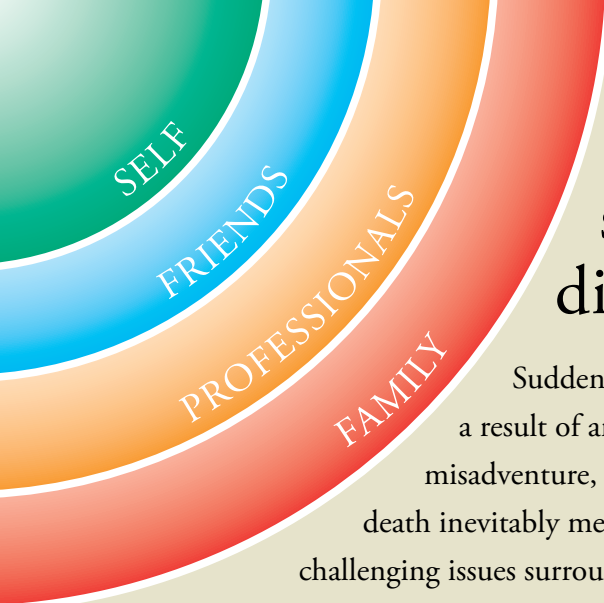




THE
GRIEF
CENTRE

Sudden death





When someone dies suddenly

Sudden death can come about as a result of an accident, suicide, illness, misadventure, or violence. Sudden death inevitably means that there are other challenging issues surrounding the death.

The unexpected death of someone close to you is likely to leave you struggling with a range of overwhelming emotions and thoughts. Your body too, is likely to react in ways you have not previously experienced.



This booklet is written to help you as you try to cope after someone close to you dies suddenly and unexpectedly.

- Other family members and friends will also be grieving. More than likely you will not be able to offer support or care for others. This is normal and expected. Seek support from others who care and are in a position to take over from you. People often want to help but don't know what to do. Accept their offers and tell people what you need.
- If you are worried about your health, a visit to your doctor may be helpful.
- Sleep and rest when you need to.
- Eat what you can and keep hydrated.
- Avoid alcohol and too much caffeine.
- Make sure you take deep breaths every now and then.



When someone dies suddenly the feelings can be overwhelming. There may be a range of feelings including:

panic

broken

fragmented

frightened

exhausted

vulnerable

confused

guilty

shocked

rejected

stunned

angry

suicidal

disbelieving

out of control

bewildered

devastated

abandoned

in pain

overwhelmed

tearful

ashamed

OR

- You may feel empty, numb or frozen as if you have no feelings at all. This could be in response to the shock. It may last for some time.
- Whatever your experience, your feelings are justified.
- Remember that crying helps.
- Remember to seek support if you need to be with someone.

When someone dies suddenly, perhaps as a result of an accident or a suicide, you may find yourself having to deal with the media, and authorities such as the police or the medical profession. Try to find someone to help you with this. In these circumstances there are generally others who can support you in dealing with the formalities.

LOOK AFTER YOURSELF AND
SEEK SUPPORT WHEN YOU NEED IT.



The loss and grief associated with sudden death is frequently complicated:

- You probably did not have a chance to say goodbye to the person.
- You may wonder what the person was going through just before they died. If the death was as a result of suicide you may wonder what the person was thinking and feeling before they died.
- You may wonder if they suffered.
- You may have many questions that are unanswered.
- You may also have many regrets associated with the person.

All of these thoughts are normal.

Looking and asking for support after someone has died suddenly can help you deal with your overwhelming thoughts and feelings. Talking to someone about all the unanswered questions you may have about the sudden death can be very helpful.

COUNSELLORS

FAMILY

FRIENDS

MEDICAL TEAM

Although you may not feel like seeking help from a SUPPORT GROUP, you may find it very comforting to talk to others who have had similar experiences. Meeting and talking with others can support your loss and the grief reactions after a sudden death.

Keep in mind....

- Grief is also personal and individual.
- There is no timetable
- Everyone grieves differently and in his or her own time
- Your thoughts, feelings and behaviours may swing wildly... but this is normal when grieving
- Seeking support is important. You don't have to struggle on your own
- The grief process will unfold naturally. It's important to be patient with yourself.



Grief is a natural response to loss and grieving takes time, patience and support.



The Grief Centre would like to recognise and thank Dr Fiona Pienaar, who has written the material for this booklet. Please acknowledge the source if you are quoting from this material in presentations or publications. For more information or assistance contact us at:

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