

Getting help

You may feel like nothing has changed since the day of the death and your pain is as intense as ever.

If, in this first year, how you've been coping hasn't really worked, now may be the time to try a different approach.

While it is difficult to reach out for help, it can make a big difference.

Some ways to reach out are: join a support group, find telephone friends, or read about grief. These are all important aspects of the work of grief.



Organizations to contact for support for you and your family.

- Family service organizations may offer support or may refer you to another service.
- Funeral homes may provide grief support.
- www.griefworksbc.com offers information, links to chat rooms and ways to honour your loss.
- There are professionals in your community listed on the Griefworks BC web site or in your local directory.
- Your local church, temple, synagogue or place of worship may have resources to help you.
- Hospice organizations have support groups or individual support.

Grief After the First Year... Now What?



It's already been a year

The first year after a death brings a range of intense emotions. As the anniversary nears, your feelings may surprise you. You may be feeling okay or wonder if you'll ever feel better.

Your feelings of grief don't suddenly disappear. It's a slow adjustment to the loss; more like a wave that comes and goes then gradually eases.

You may notice days or weeks when you don't feel the pain or think about your loved one. It may feel like you're continuing on with your life.

The second year may be harder as the reality of your loss settles in. At times, the feelings return unexpectedly as a wave of grief.

Each person grieves in their own way and time. No one can tell you when your grief will be over or when the pain of your loss will ease. Your grief journey is unique.

Partners, kids and family may not be able to comfort each other when their own grief is so overwhelming. Be patient with each other.

Kids and adults grieve differently. Kids usually act out their feelings with behavior change. Other family or support groups can give them support. Make sure they get the support they need.

You may hear, "You should be over it by now" which feels like you're being abandoned. They may do this because they don't know how to comfort you. Tell them what you need from them.

Healthy grieving is telling your story to someone who will listen without judging. Find a specially trained volunteer, pastor or good friend to listen when you need to talk.

You may be lonely without your loved one. Connecting with old friends or making new ones may help fill that gap.

Your emotional and physical health



If there's no medical cause, your body may be saying that the feelings need to come out.

Maybe you wake up often or have trouble getting to sleep. Caffeine or alcohol make it worse. Exercise helps.

Maintain a balance. The energy you put into your chores and work should balance what you put into caring for your emotional or spiritual needs.

You now know that the work of grief takes more time and energy than you thought. Be patient with yourself and those around you.

If you need answers to why it happened, ask more questions. A meeting with medical staff may help. You may have to accept that you will never know why.

If you felt angry or guilty before, it's natural to still feel angry or guilty. You may have already realized that pushing feelings down or ignoring them doesn't work.

Deep sadness may return or appear for the first time. You might go into the 'pit' again but you will come out.

'Time will heal' is a common saying. Time does soften the pain, but it still hurts.

You might have joy and laughter back in your life. This isn't disloyal to your loved one's memory.

You may cry a little or a lot. What's right for you is okay. You may be tired, have headaches, sleep problems, stomach, head or chest pain.

