

# Employee Assistance Unit

Loss and Bereavement



## **Tips on how to help others throughout the grieving process**

- **Listen and be patient**
- **Don't make decisions for them**
- **Be there for them**
- **Don't tell them you understand how they feel**
- **Help them learn about grief**
- **Don't force them to speak about the loss until they are ready**

Remember that grieving is a normal process. Some grieve quietly and alone, while some are more emotionally expressive. Some may choose to work through their grief, while others choose to passively give in to their grief.

## **Coping Strategies**

Here are a few coping strategies to help cushion the emotional impact of loss:

- **Talk about your feelings**
- **Avoid making major decisions**
- **Exercise, eat healthy, and get adequate rest**
- **Seek medical, psychological, or spiritual guidance**
- **Learn to identify the emotions associated with the event**
- **Keep a journal of your feelings**
- **Maintain hope**

## **Are you experiencing:**

- **Death of a loved one?**
- **Illness?**
- **Divorce or separation?**
- **Financial problems?**
- **Empty nest syndrome?**
- **A traumatic event?**

If so, you may be suffering from the effects of a loss. Many individuals consider a loss to be a death of a loved one because there is a tremendous sense of separation. A loss can also be the end of a relationship, a child leaving home, or even the loss of a job. There is no clear cut mourning process; however, many people experience loneliness, sorrow and sadness. This is a natural part of the grieving process.

**Support is available 24/7**

**Call Any Time  
(646) 610-6730**

## **Common reactions associated with the grieving process:**

Most people have heard of the five stages of grief, also known as the Kubler-Ross model. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross was a groundbreaking psychiatrist who ignited public conversation about death in a time when the subject was largely taboo. Her 1969 book, *On Death and Dying*, introduced the world to the five stages of grief: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Though the stages were originally intended to reflect the experiences of those dying, Kubler-Ross later extended their definition to encompass the experiences of anyone who has suffered a loss or tragedy. The five stages are:

1. **Denial:** This stage is often experienced as a state of shock. You may feel numb, disoriented, or overwhelmed. Some report a trance-like state or a sense of unreality. Though confusing, these feelings help us to slowly come to terms with the reality of the loss, rather than dealing with all of our emotions up front.
2. **Anger:** Anger can be directed at anyone who you feel has blame in your loss. You might feel anger toward your family and friends, your loved one who has passed, or the doctors who were unable to save them. You may also be angry with yourself or the world. This anger is a manifestation of the pain of your loss; it can be understood as a measure of your love for the person.

3. **Bargaining:** You may find yourself asking “what if” questions, thinking about what could have been done to save your loved one, and perhaps bargaining with God or the world: “If I could have just one more day with them...” Bargaining is often accompanied by guilt. This is basically our way of negotiating with the hurt and pain of the loss.
4. **Depression:** Depression and sadness are the most recognizable, commonly-accepted symptoms of grief, yet all too often grieving persons are expected to “snap out of it” and act normal. It’s important to understand that after the loss of a loved one, depression is a perfectly normal emotional response. During this stage, you will likely withdraw from normal activities and feel as if you are in a fog of sadness. You may find it difficult to go on without that person in your life.
5. **Acceptance:** This is the point where we accept our new reality, one in which our loved one is no longer present. Acceptance does not necessarily mean that you’re “okay” with your situation; it simply means you recognize that the person is indeed gone, that your situation has changed. Acceptance is also when we begin to pick up the pieces and reorganize our lives to fit in with this new reality.

The five stages of grief are not linear; they can occur in any order, and possibly more than once.



## **Employee Assistance Unit**

The Employee Assistance Unit (EAU) was designed to assist members of the service that are experiencing personal problems. The early identification and resolution of these problems can minimize negative impact on their career or home life.

Referrals are accepted from fellow members of the service, unions and fraternal organizations, family and friends.

Our unit is **NOT** a disciplinary arm of the department. Communication between EAU personnel and members of the service remain confidential, **EXCEPT** in cases of serious misconduct and suicidal behavior.

The Unit's members are available weekdays from 0700-2100 hours. In emergency cases during non-business hours unit members will be contacted and will respond.

For assistance coping with a loss, contact the Employee Assistance Unit to speak to a counselor or need a referral.

### **Employee Assistance Unit**

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