



Tips for Careworkers: Grief and Loss among Staff

What it is: Grief is a response to a loss. Bereavement is the time of grief experienced by people following the death of someone close to them.

Why it matters: Caring for others can be rewarding. But grief over the death of people you care for is not unusual. It may contribute to burnout and overwhelming stress.

Staff working in aged care look after many people who die. As a result, they may experience repeated grief. Sometimes it can lead to complicated or prolonged grief where grief is very intense and/or long lasting. Report to nursing/supervisory staff any feelings of grief that are very strong, last for more than six months or make it difficult for you to do your work appropriately.

What I need to know: Grief is a response to bereavement and loss. How people grieve varies. No-one can tell another how they should grieve.

There are bereavement services to help you deal with grief and loss.

Talking to your supervisor and colleagues about what you are experiencing can help. If you need more support, request their help to find it.

Note

Ways of dealing with grief include:

- taking care of your own physical health
- acknowledging your grief
- talking with colleagues
- talking with pastoral care providers
- talking with bereavement counsellors
- talking with a GP.

Note

Careworkers in aged care can develop close bonds with older people and families. You may experience grief.

Do

Instead of 'protecting yourself' from future loss by keeping a distance from clients, learn ways to cope with grief and develop self-care. You can grieve and still care well.

Do

Visit the ELDAC self-care room for self-care ideas.

Name:

My reflections:

Who can I talk with if I experience grief?

How could I start a conversation with other staff experiencing grief?

My notes:

See related palliAGED Practice
Tip Sheets:
Grief and Loss among Older People,
Families and Residents
Self-care
Talking about Dying

For references and the latest version of all Tip Sheets visit
palliaged.com.au/Practice-Centre/For-Careworkers