



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

**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.

**Name:**

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## 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  
Spiritual Care  
Talking about Dying

References used to develop this sheet are available at  
[www.palliaged.com.au](http://www.palliaged.com.au)