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maybe a lot of time, before you feel ok again.

9

LOSS AND GRIEF

The loss of something or someone you love and care about affects everyone in different ways. Grief is the reaction to this loss and wishing for things to be like they were before.

Some types of loss include:

- The death of someone you love
- Separation or divorce of your parents
- Moving away or being apart from your friends and family
- Breaking up with your boyfriend/girlfriend
- Leaving school

Reactions to loss can include:

- Having unanswerable questions
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Can't be bothered doing anything – like going to school, work, spending time with friends or playing your favourite sport
- Everything seems to remind you of the person
- Feeling sad, angry, numb, tired, sick, scared, lonely, confused
- Lack of hunger
- Feeling guilty from thinking that you should feel worse
- You might not even know what you feel

Try to remember that there's no one way you should or will feel, and there's no magic way to make the pain go away. It'll take a bit of time, maybe a lot of time, before you start feeling okay again.

"I think about it a lot. Sometimes I feel sad and cry. Other times I smile and laugh thinking about all the good times. Slowly things are getting better"

When you are grieving, you could try:

- Talking with someone you trust and are close to about your feelings. Its not always easy to talk about how you feel, but you might find it really helps you. You could also try talking to your school counsellor or calling one of the telephone counselling services listed on the contact fact sheet.
- Asking for help when you need it.
- Have a space where you can be on your own if you need to, but try not to completely isolate yourself.
- Writing down what you're thinking about. This could help sort out the jumble of thoughts in your head at the moment.
- Listening to music, exercising, hanging out with friends. Try to find some time for something you like doing that helps you to relax.

Seeking help

Everyone grieves in different ways and for different lengths of time. Usually, people find a way to keep some good memories about the person or thing they have lost and can get on with life. Sometimes though, people get stuck and can't move forward after their loss. These people may develop feelings of depression, may misuse drugs or feel like ending it all.

If you feel like your sadness is getting to the point where it is seriously interfering with your ability to function, you may need to seek help in coming to terms with the loss and how you feel about it. Check out the **Contacts** fact sheet (number 12) for some useful contacts.



If someone you know has lost a loved one...

When someone you know loses a loved one, you might feel scared and uncomfortable about talking to them because of how intense the feelings involved are, and not know what to say. Try to remember that talking to a friend about their loss could actually be a positive thing for them.

Some things you could do to help include:

- Keep in touch with them. Be there for them, even if they tell you they want to be alone.
- Listen to their story as many times as they need you to.
- Give them time.
- If you have experienced a loss, you could talk about your experience and how you dealt with it.
- Encourage your friend to talk about and show how they feel, but try not to tell them how to think or feel, or force them to talk about their feelings.
- Suggest they talk to someone with skills in this area like a youth worker or Kids Help Line (call 1800 55 1800).

Things that might not be so good to say or do include:

- “Just be happy that you had them for as long as you did”. This might make them feel guilty that they are grieving.
- “I know how you feel”. A better alternative is “I experienced a similar thing years ago and I remember how hard it was”.
- “You should be over this by now”. Everyone grieves for different lengths of time.

