

Helping someone who is grieving

Be a good listener

Grieving people need to talk about their loss, acknowledging that they have been through a difficult experience. You can't fix their grief but you can be there, hear their story, and share their journey.

Be a shoulder to cry on

Allow them to cry with you, crying helps the release of emotions and this helps with healing.

Be in touch with them

Drop in, call on the telephone and say "I was thinking of you today", write a letter, send an email, remember special days like Christmas, birthdays and anniversaries.

When someone has experienced a loss, there will be big and small adjustments to be made in their lives. These could bring uncertainty, frustration, fear, sadness and change as each new day comes along. Grief is about adapting to change in life, thoughts, hopes, beliefs and the future.

Be a friend

Often being there is all that is needed to support someone who is grieving.

(Adapted from the writings of Doris Zagdanski)

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Trauma

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Trauma is a psychologically distressing event that is outside the range of human experience. Any sudden event that causes a person intense emotion can be classified as trauma.

Most forms of trauma are unexpected and the person is rarely prepared for the event.

Traumatic events can include any form of accident; a hold up, a sudden and unexpected loss.

Trauma often involves an intense sense of fear, terror and helplessness

What you might be feeling

Shame

- for being helpless, emotional or needing others
- for not reacting the way one wished

Anger

- at what happened, at whatever or who ever caused the event
- over the injustice and senselessness
- at shame and feeling helpless.
- WHY ME?

Memories

- of feelings of loss of love
- for others who have been injured or died of like events

Let down

- Disappointments

- Hope for the future
- Hope for better times

Other Reactions May Include

- feeling numb and/or inadequate
- trouble sleeping, tiredness
- changed eating habits
- nightmares and intruding thoughts
- finding it hard to make decisions
- difficulty in focussing and concentrating
- lapses in memory
- difficulty in breathing,
- feeling tense and sick
- heightened responses
- muscular tension and pain
- a loss of interest in pleasurable things such as sex
- feeling depressed

Some people increase coffee, alcohol or drug consumption after a traumatic event. Accidents are more frequent after intense stress. Pregnancies are more common after some crises.

Effects on Family and Social Relationships

Trauma can strengthen friendships through the common experience. It can also isolate people from others as they feel no-one really understands them. Little things may irritate you and cause stress and blowups.

What Can Help

Your reactions to an event is normal though painful and difficult. Here are some other suggestions:

- Alternate periods of physical activity and relaxation.
- Supplement your diet with Vitamins C, B2, B6, Calcium and Magnesium.
- Keep yourself busy by structuring your time.
- Keep your life as normal as possible.
- Make as many daily decisions as feel you can control.
- Don't make any big life changes.
- Spend time with others but allow yourself time to think and feel.
- Talk it out.
- Give yourself time to get over the event and to feel rotten.
- Realise that others are stressed as well.
- Be kind to yourself.
- Do things that make you feel good.
- Keep a journal.
- Remember your reactions are normal and don't feel that you are crazy.

If you are becoming isolated ask for help. If these things continue to affect you severely or go on for a prolonged period without easing, you may need to seek help from a professional.