

Bereavement, loss and grief

hse.ie/grief 



The global COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact across the globe on our **experiences of death, dying and bereavement**.

The way the virus spreads, the restrictions imposed on travel (domestic and international), visits to healthcare settings, visits to residential and nursing homes, house visits, funeral arrangements – all impacted on death, bereavement and grieving.

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Working with the IHF and a range of partners, the HSE is promoting supports and services for people who may be struggling and dealing with issues responding to loss – and people trying to support those bereaved.

We have new dedicated content at **www.hse.ie/grief** to increase knowledge about grief, bereavement and supports. Working with the IHF, we have a National Bereavement Support Line, new hospital resource packs and a commitment to funding five hospital-based Bereavement Liaison Officers to support bereaved families.

[hse.ie/grief](https://www.hse.ie/grief) 



Grief is a natural process

Bereavement is the death or loss of someone close to us. It is characterised by grief, which is the process and the range of emotions we go through as we adjust to loss over time.

The death of someone important to us can be emotionally devastating - whether that be a partner, family member, friend or work colleague. It is natural to go through a range of physical and emotional processes as we gradually come to terms with the loss.

In most cases, grief is not a diagnosable mental health problem. Nevertheless, it can impact on our everyday lives and it can take a long time to adapt to life after a loss.

People grieve differently

There is no right or wrong way to feel following a death or loss. Grief will be different for everyone, so try not to expect your grief to follow any set course.

It's not always easy to recognise when bereavement, grief or loss are the reason you're acting or feeling differently. Many different factors will affect your grief experience after someone dies.

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There's no time limit

Grief does not come in stages – it can come and go. Some feelings might occasionally come while others might be more prolonged or persistent. Most people move through different feelings in their own way and at their own pace. There is no time limit to grieving and everyone's grief experience is different.

Some people feel a strong range of emotions from early on in their bereavement, while for others, feelings may take a while to develop. More intense feelings might come and go unexpectedly, or at significant times like anniversaries, birthdays and holidays.

So be kind to yourself

Take each day at a time. You might have good days and bad days, and that's ok.

Be patient and gentle with yourself.

Allow yourself time to experience and express your feelings – remember there is no right or wrong way to be feeling at any particular time, and different feelings might occasionally come and go.

Always look after your physical and mental health, especially when days feel more difficult than others. Get good sleep and regular exercise, try to keep a healthy diet, and avoid alcohol.

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Others can support you

Accept emotional and practical support from others who care about you. Let them know how you're feeling and tell them what you find helpful. It's ok to ask others to be with when you need them or when you're finding things difficult.

If you need some extra support, remember there are organisations that provide:

- trusted information
- telephone support
- bereavement self-help resources
- support for people bereaved by suicide
- grief counselling

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Share: Support information on grief

Download and help us to share a range of social media images, messages and A4 posters.

Available [here](https://www.hse.ie/grief)



#CopingWithGrief



From the **HSE** in partnership with **Irish Hospice Foundation**



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Call the IHF Bereavement Support Line on

1800 80 70 77

(Monday to Friday, from 10am to 1pm)

