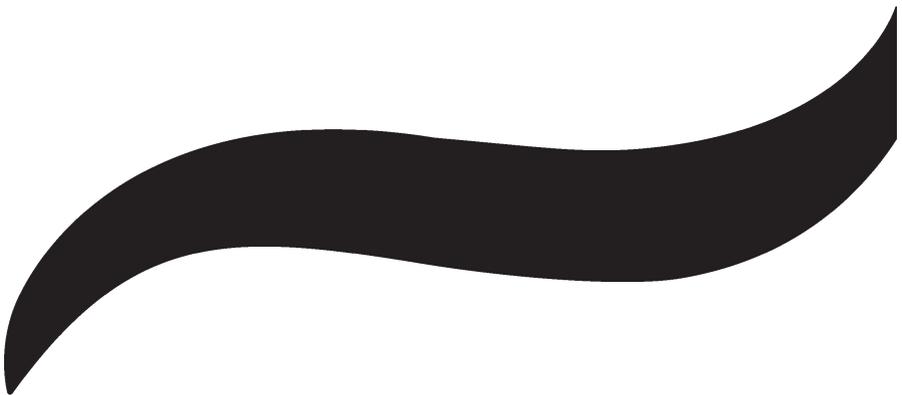


Dealing with loss

Information for clients



Loss

Grief is a natural response to loss. It's the emotional suffering you feel when something or someone you love is taken away. You may associate grief with the death of a loved one – and this type of loss does often cause very intense grief – but any loss can cause grief, including:

- ❖ A relationship breakup
- ❖ Loss of health
- ❖ Losing a job/role
- ❖ Loss of financial stability
- ❖ A miscarriage
- ❖ Death of a pet
- ❖ Loss of a cherished dream
- ❖ A loved one's serious illness
- ❖ Loss of a friendship
- ❖ Loss of safety after a trauma

COMMON SYMPTOMS OF GRIEF

Loss affects people in different ways. Almost anything that is experienced in the early stages of grief is normal – including feeling as if you are going crazy, feeling as if you are in a bad dream or questioning your beliefs. It is common to experience some of the following symptoms when you are suffering loss.

Shock and disbelief – right after a loss it can be hard to accept what happened. You may feel numb, have trouble believing that the loss really happened, or even deny the truth.

Sadness – profound sadness is probably the most universally experienced symptom of grief. You may feel emptiness, despair, yearning, or deep loneliness. You may also cry a lot or feel emotionally unstable.

Guilt – you may experience regret or guilt about things that were or were not said.

Anger – you may feel anger and resentment. Anger may be directed at yourself, God, doctors or a person. You may feel the need to blame someone for the loss experienced.

Fear – a significant loss can trigger worries and fears, feelings of anxiety, helplessness or insecurity and even panic attacks. The loss of a loved one can trigger fears about mortality, facing life without them, or responsibilities now faced alone.

Physical symptoms – we often think of grief as a strictly emotional process, but it often involves physical problems including fatigue, nausea, lowered immunity, weight loss or weight gain, aches and pains and insomnia.

“there is not a typical response to loss, as there is no typical loss. Our grieving is as individual as our lives.”

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

COPING WITH LOSS

Getting support

The most important factor in healing after loss is having the support of other people. Even if you are not comfortable talking about your feelings, expressing them when grieving is important. Sharing loss makes the burden of grief easier to manage. Support can come from different places. It is important to find the best support for you.

Take care of yourself

When grieving, it is more important than ever to take care of yourself. The stress of a major loss can deplete your energy and emotional reserves. Looking after your physical and emotional needs will help you to get through difficult times.

When loss doesn't go away

It is normal to feel sad, numb or angry following a loss. As time passes these emotions should become less intense as you accept the loss and start to move forward. If you don't feel better over time, or your grief intensifies, this may be a sign that it has developed into a more serious problem. This could be complicated grief or depression.

Complicated grief

Symptoms of complicated grief include:

- ❖ Intrusive thoughts or images of your loved one
- ❖ Denial of the loss or sense of disbelief
- ❖ Imagining that your loved one is alive
- ❖ Intense longing and yearning for person or thing you have lost
- ❖ Searching for the person in familiar places
- ❖ Avoiding things that remind you of your loved one
- ❖ Extreme anger or bitterness over the loss
- ❖ Feeling that life is empty or meaningless

The difference between grief and depression

Distinguishing between grief and depression is not always easy as they share many symptoms. However, there are ways to tell the difference. Grief can be a roller coaster, involving a wide variety of emotions and a mix of good and bad days. Even in the middle of the grieving process people will have moments of pleasure or happiness. Depression tends to cause more constant feelings of emptiness and despair.

Symptoms that suggest depression rather than grief:

- ❖ Intense, pervasive sense of guilt
- ❖ Thoughts of suicide or a preoccupation with dying
- ❖ Feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness
- ❖ Slow speech and body movements
- ❖ Inability to function at work, home and/or school
- ❖ Seeing or hearing things that are not there

FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT:

Useful Contacts

For information on mental services, supports, opportunities or self-help information call:

- ❖ North Lanarkshire: Well Informed 0800 073 0918
- ❖ South Lanarkshire: Lanarkshire Association for Mental Health Information Line: 0330 3000 133

For further information on mental health and well-being, visit Lanarkshire's Elament website: www.elament.org.uk

Remember, should your problems persist or you feel you need help urgently please contact your GP. The following organisations can also prove useful in and out of hours.

- ❖ **Breathing Space** - 0800 83 85 87
(Mon - Thu, 6pm - 2am; Fri 6pm - Mon 6am)
www.breathingspacescotland.co.uk
- ❖ **Samaritans** - 116 123 (24hrs) www.samaritans.org
- ❖ **NHS24** - 111 (Out of hours) www.nhs24.com
- ❖ **Healthy Working Lives** - 08452 300 323 (Local),
0800 019 2211 (National),
www.healthyworkinglives.com
- ❖ **Childline** - 0800 11 11 (24hrs) www.childline.org.uk
- ❖ **NHS Inform** - 0800 22 44 88 www.nhsinform.co.uk
- ❖ **Parentline Scotland** - 0808 800 22 22
www.children1st.org.uk/parentline
- ❖ **National Debt Line Scotland** - 0808 808 4000
www.nationaldebtline.co.uk/scotland
- ❖ **National Domestic Abuse Helpline** - 0800 027 1234

WHAT IS WELL CONNECTED?

Well Connected is a new programme in Lanarkshire, sometimes referred to as social prescribing or community referral. It makes it easier for us and people we know to take part in and benefit from activities and services that we know improve our well-being which means how we feel about ourselves and our lives. There are a number of Well Connected areas available to us and we can benefit from more than one:

- ❖ Physical activity and leisure opportunities
- ❖ Volunteering
- ❖ Employment
- ❖ Arts and culture
- ❖ Benefits, welfare and debt advice
- ❖ Learning opportunities
- ❖ Stress Control Classes in communities
- ❖ Health Walks
- ❖ Mindfulness Classes.

For information on any of the above call:

- ❖ North Lanarkshire: Well Informed 0800 073 0918
- ❖ South Lanarkshire: Lanarkshire Association for Mental Health Information Line: 0330 3000 133
- ❖ Visit: www.elament.org.uk/self-help-resources/well-connected-programme.aspx

HEALTHY READING

All public libraries have a healthy reading section making it easier to access mental health and well-being leaflets, books, CDs, DVDs and web-based support. All libraries across Lanarkshire have resources to help us get the most from life such as living life to the full, sleeping better and becoming more confident or overcoming and coping with mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, stress, dementia and panic. There are also resources for all ages including supporting young people, adults and older people as well as items on positive parenting. Simply pop into your local library.

GUIDED SUPPORT:

Stress Control Classes

Stress Control classes will help develop skills and techniques to manage common issues caused by modern day living such as stress, anxiety or low confidence.

The classes are delivered in local community facilities and consist of six sessions lasting 90 minutes each. We will not need to speak about our issues during the class. Just sit back and listen about helpful stress control techniques. Feel free to bring someone along with you for support. To find your nearest class and book a place, call **0300 303 0447**.

Living Life to the Full - Online Course

Living Life to The Full is a free web-based life skills course that aims to help us tackle and respond to issues/demands which we all meet in our everyday lives. It will explore issues such as understanding why we feel the way we do, problem solving, noticing and challenging unhelpful thoughts and behaviours and anxiety control. You can register for the course at **www.lltff.com** and complete as many or as few modules as you wish.

If you feel you need additional help, the Living Life to The Full course is also available with support from self help coaches (via Action on Depression Scotland). To find out more visit **www.aod.lltffionline.co.uk**

Living Life: Guided Self Help and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy - Telephone Support

Living Life is a free telephone support service for people suffering from low mood, mild to moderate depression, symptoms of anxiety or a combination of both. Trained Self-help coaches and therapists will guide us through a range of workbooks over a series of telephone sessions. For more information or to make a telephone appointment, call **0800 328 9655** (Mon–Fri 1–9pm).

NHS Lanarkshire - for local services and the latest health news visit www.nhslanarkshire.org.uk

NHS Lanarkshire General Enquiry Line: 0300 3030 243

NHS inform - The national health information service for Scotland.

www.nhsinform.co.uk
Tel No: 0800 22 44 88

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact the NHS Lanarkshire General Enquiry Line on 0300 3030 243 or e-mail info2@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk



www.patientopinion.org.uk

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