

A BRIEF GUIDE TO DEALING WITH THE DEATH OF A COLLEAGUE

When a colleague dies the impact on his/her co-workers can be tremendous and can influence the workplace in a variety of ways. When the death is unexpected, as in sudden or violent death or in an accident or suicide the grief response can be quite traumatic.

Each person's experience of loss and each individual's grief response is unique to that person. There are, however, some common feelings and symptoms that are often experienced by the grieving. These include: sadness, anxiety, depression, fear, irritability, guilt, anger, and a variety of other reactions including physical symptoms such as headaches, fatigue, intrusive thoughts and sleeplessness. These are all normal responses to a loss situation.

THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIES MAY HELP YOU THROUGH THIS SAD TIME:

- Talk to your colleagues and family and friends about what has happened and how you feel.
- Listen to and respect others – some may want to talk, some may not.
- Try to keep to a regular daily routine.
- Keep to a balanced diet.
- Avoid too much coffee and tea as caffeine can affect the ability to relax and sleep.
- Keep up outdoor activities, such as going for a walk or gardening. These activities can take you away from the stress and help to refresh you mentally.
- Try and get some aerobic exercise.
- Get some quiet time for yourself.
- Avoid the excessive use of alcohol, smoking and other drugs.

Try to understand that feelings and emotions such as sadness and tears; anger and irritability; low motivation and energy; being withdrawn and forgetful are common at this time. These and many other negative emotions and reactions are the normal human response to grief.

If you feel that you are overreacting to the situation or want to talk to someone outside the workplace book an appointment with your Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). Talking to a professional can help with understanding and gives you an opportunity to talk more openly than you might with colleagues or family.



Appointments can be Telephone, Face to Face, Video or e-Counselling.
To arrange support at a convenient time and location you can contact EAP Services anytime.

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