

Grief and Young People

Helping Yourself or a Friend

What do young people say about grief?

You're not alone! Grief in young people is common.

It's something that you go through throughout life, a path you have to walk down

Grief is a response to a range of losses:

such as the death of a close person or pet, parents' divorce, job loss, life transitions, relationship break-ups, identity changes and world crises.

You grieve so many different things. But you grieve it all differently.

The experience of grief is unique to every person.

People grieve in many different ways. It varies from person to person.

Grief has lots of different parts to it.

Grief has emotional, psychological and physical dimensions.

Grief doesn't have a set pattern or timeline.

It's not something that happens and you get over it. You learn to surf the waves better. The grief is there, and you get better at dealing with it.

Not all grief is recognised or validated.

There is so much unsolicited advice and it's tokenistic and it doesn't help.

Grief can affect the whole family system.

There are multiple people grieving and it can be hard to support each other when going through grief.

Grief can be irrational.

There's also this guilt that comes with, like, thinking I "should" have done this and that. It's quite illogical, it's quite irrational, but it's still there and it's hard to deal with on your own.

It's okay to have boundaries about what you tell people.

If you're not ready to hang out, that's okay. You don't have to tell people your story. Tell them in their own time.

Grief is normal but is also linked to mental health problems.

The mental health aspect isn't taken as seriously but it can be really rough.



How to help a grieving friend:

Listen

Acknowledge my thoughts and feelings. Listen to understand, not to respond or fix it.

Normalise and validate

Make me feel heard, validated, understood

Respect choice

Provide the option to talk. Ask, "Do you wanna talk about it? Say, "I'm not going to push you to talk but if you want to talk, I'm here."

Check-in over time

It doesn't have to be one conversation. Reach out to let me know you're there.

Look after yourself

When you're helping someone, it's okay to give yourself time and space and let yourself feel what you need to feel, too.



What NOT to do:

Avoid out-dated ideas

Avoid ideas like "stages of grief" or "getting over it".

You go through the stages over and over again in different orders. I needed help to move forward, not to forget what happened.

Avoid clichés and platitudes

Don't tell me it will get better in time. I'm not in that time and you're not helping me.

Avoid unsolicited advice

I need support, not solutions or advice about what I "should" do.

Avoid making it about you

Don't pretend you understand. Don't divert the conversation back to your experience.



Designed by Emily-Rose Lochore, 2024

