

Voluntary assisted dying

Information on grief and bereavement support for family, friends and carers

This guide provides information to help you after the death of your loved one. It explains:

- common feelings you may experience
- some ways you can take care of your mental and physical health
- the support available to you.

What is grief?

Grief is a normal and natural response to losing someone. Every person can have a different experience of grief—some people express emotions openly, while others grieve privately. There's no timeline or 'right' way to grieve. You may experience grief before your loved one dies, especially when caring for someone with illness. Grief could persist for weeks, months or years.

Coping with grief is not about 'getting over' the person's death but about finding ways to live with the loss.

Grief after a voluntary assisted dying death

Grief following a voluntary assisted dying death can be especially complex.

You may feel:

- relief that your loved one's suffering has ended
- gratitude that your loved one was able to choose how they died
- sadness
- guilt
- anxiety
- confusion.

These emotions may coexist and shift over time. It is okay to feel conflicted. Grief doesn't follow a predictable path.

Looking after yourself

This may be a difficult time. Some ways that you can take care of yourself during this time:

Self-care: Rest, eat well, exercise and take time for yourself.

Expression: Write, cry, reflect or visit meaningful places.

Connection: Talk to trusted friends or join support groups.

Seek help: Reach out when you need support.

Spiritual/Cultural practices: Meditation, prayer, rituals, or attending places of worship.

"Despite the complexities, most grieving people want to be heard, seen and understood. Spending time with people who can listen, empathise and be present will help."

When to seek support

If grief feels overwhelming or you are struggling to cope, consider speaking with:

- your GP
- a grief counsellor
- support services listed below.

Help is always available — support is available weeks, months, or years after your loss.

Helpful Contacts (completed by local voluntary assisted dying coordinator)

Service	Name	Contact
Local bereavement service		

Support services

Service	Description	Contact
Voluntary Assisted Dying Support Groups	Join a free online peer-led support group.	To register: griefline.org.au/vad-support-groups Information: 03 9087 2312
Griefline	Call Griefline for free support if you are experiencing grief and loss.	Phone: 1300 845 745, 8am - 8pm, 7 days a week Website: https://griefline.org.au/
13 YARN	Yarn to Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Crisis Supporters about your needs, worries or concerns.	Phone: 13 92 76 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) Website: www.13yarn.org.au
Carers NSW	See bereavement resources for carers fact sheet for carers or listen to 'in our own voices', a series of podcasts that captures carers' conversations about palliative care (recorded in multiple languages).	Phone: (02) 9280 4744 Website: https://www.carersnsw.org.au
National Centre for Childhood Grief	Access free counselling for children experiencing bereavement.	Phone: 1300 654 556 Website: childhoodgrief.org.au
Lifeline	Call lifeline for free 24/7 crisis counselling.	Phone: 13 11 14 Website: https://www.lifeline.org.au/