

# Contents

<b>Before you begin</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Topic 1 Recognise reactions to loss and grief</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1A</b> Recognise reactions to loss and grief	<b>2</b>
<b>1B</b> Take into account social, cultural, ethnic and spiritual differences	<b>17</b>
<b>1C</b> Identify situations where there may be risk to the health and safety of the person or other people and make appropriate referrals	<b>22</b>
<b>1D</b> Identify and assess an individual's suicide risk and where necessary refer to appropriate services	<b>32</b>
Summary	<b>42</b>
Learning checkpoint 1: Recognise reactions to loss and grief	<b>43</b>
<b>Topic 2 Engage empathetically</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>2A</b> Interact with individuals with empathy, sensitivity, professionalism and courtesy	<b>48</b>
<b>2B</b> Identify and respect social, cultural, ethnic and spiritual differences	<b>55</b>
<b>2C</b> Select and use verbal and nonverbal communication approaches that acknowledge the individual's emotional needs	<b>63</b>
Summary	<b>70</b>
Learning checkpoint 2: Engage empathetically	<b>71</b>
<b>Topic 3 Offer support and information</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>3A</b> Identify individuals who experience difficulty with grief and trauma and link or refer them to options for further help as needed	<b>76</b>
<b>3B</b> Provide information about grief and bereavement support services and resources	<b>84</b>
<b>3C</b> Identify, suggest or use strategies for formal and informal grief and bereavement support	<b>93</b>
<b>3D</b> Obtain feedback from individuals to confirm that options are clearly understood	<b>98</b>
<b>3E</b> Maintain confidentiality in line with organisational practices	<b>105</b>
Summary	<b>114</b>
Learning checkpoint 3: Offer support and information	<b>115</b>
<b>Topic 4 Care for yourself</b>	<b>119</b>
<b>4A</b> Monitor own stress level	<b>120</b>
<b>4B</b> Recognise and minimise risk to self	<b>124</b>
<b>4C</b> Identify and respond to the need for supervision and debriefing	<b>130</b>
Summary	<b>138</b>
Learning checkpoint 4: Care for yourself	<b>139</b>
<b>Topic 5 Review support provided</b>	<b>141</b>
<b>5A</b> Reflect on outcomes during and after support is provided	<b>142</b>
<b>5B</b> Identify where further support is required	<b>145</b>
<b>5C</b> Review practices for continuous improvement	<b>149</b>
Summary	<b>154</b>
Learning checkpoint 5: Review support provided	<b>155</b>

### Cognitive responses

Cognitive responses to grief include:

- ▶ confusion and/or difficulty concentrating
- ▶ reduced self-esteem and a loss of confidence
- ▶ constantly thinking about the deceased person
- ▶ denial
- ▶ hopelessness
- ▶ a change in world view, questioning of values and beliefs and/or search for meaning
- ▶ suicidal ideation
- ▶ fear of going mad.

### Behavioural responses

Behavioural responses to grief include:

- ▶ helplessness
- ▶ poor diet
- ▶ overactivity or underactivity
- ▶ social withdrawal
- ▶ agitation
- ▶ neglect of self-care.

### Physiological responses

Physiological responses to grief include:

- ▶ loss of appetite
- ▶ sleep disturbances
- ▶ tiredness
- ▶ weight loss or gain
- ▶ susceptibility to illness
- ▶ feeling unwell.

## Identify responses

Being aware of the range of grief responses can help you plan the support required, as shown here.

Knowing the range of responses allows you to:

- ▶ identify whether a person's reactions are expected responses to grief or whether they are having atypical reactions and require additional support
- ▶ identify the stage of grief the person is in; for example, if they are in the initial stage of shock or they are beginning to integrate their loss
- ▶ consider how the context and circumstances of the loss may impact the way a person grieves
- ▶ normalise what the person is experiencing
- ▶ consider the appropriate or necessary type of support required.

### Instrumental grieving

Instrumental grievers:

- ▶ take a more rational, cognitive approach to grief
- ▶ may immerse themselves in activity to avoid dwelling on their loss
- ▶ are often reluctant to express their feelings
- ▶ prefer to grieve privately rather than publicly.

Instrumental grievers may prefer to spend time alone and not want to talk about their feelings.

### Intuitive grieving

Intuitive grievers:

- ▶ experience grief as intense waves of emotion
- ▶ express their grief openly by crying or showing anguish
- ▶ seek support from others

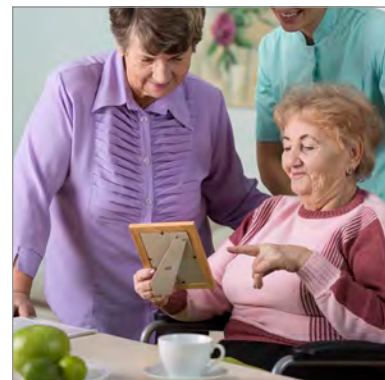
want to talk about their loss.

Intuitive grievers may benefit most from being encouraged to express their feelings and seek support from others.

## Continuing bonds

In the past, bereaved people were often encouraged to 'let go' of the deceased person by severing emotional bonds and ties with them. More recent approaches suggest that it may be more helpful for the bereaved individual to develop and maintain a continuing bond with the deceased.

A continuing bond means finding a way of maintaining a relationship with the person who died. This may include focusing on happy memories of the deceased person and remembering the positive aspects of their life, rather than the sadness of their death. By establishing a continuing bond with the deceased, the bereaved person constructs a new relationship with them that is a source of comfort and solace. By maintaining this, the grieving person can more easily integrate the loss into their ongoing life.



## Meaning reconstruction

Meaning reconstruction focuses on how an individual makes sense of a significant loss. For an individual to integrate their loss, they need to find meaning in the event and circumstances that disrupted their life and sense of coherence.

Bereaved individuals need to piece together their lives by exploring the meaning of the loss through talking about it. This helps them rebuild their life without the deceased person. Integration occurs when they are able to incorporate the loss into their life.



# 1C Identify situations where there may be risk to the health and safety of the person or other people and make appropriate referrals

Loss, grief and bereavement are highly stressful experiences that can have a range of impacts on an individual's health and wellbeing. Health and wellbeing are based on a balance within a person's mental, physical, emotional and spiritual life. Negative life events, such as the experiences of loss and grief, disrupt and unbalance an individual's sense of wellbeing and may drain them of energy. You need to be able to recognise the elevated risk of negative impacts associated with loss and assist grieving individuals to obtain appropriate support.



## Negative impacts of a loss in health and wellbeing

Loss may affect physical health in a number of ways, which in turn lead to negative impacts on an individual's social and emotional health. Some of these physical impacts are shown below.

### Physical impacts of loss include

- ▶ exhaustion and a lack of energy
- ▶ headaches
- ▶ lowered immunity
- ▶ high blood pressure
- ▶ disrupted sleep
- ▶ a rapid pulse
- ▶ shortness of breath
- ▶ digestive complaints
- ▶ a loss of appetite
- ▶ worsened pre-existing conditions, such as asthma or skin conditions.

## Work role boundaries

Where there is a need that you are unable to meet because you lack the skills or knowledge to perform the task, you may be able to seek support for training as part of your regular appraisal with your supervisor. If there is a need that is to be met immediately, inform your supervisor that you require training as soon as possible.

Conditions such as mental illness, intellectual disability or dementia can affect a person's ability to clearly express their needs and can lead to behaviours that are outside the scope of your training to manage. In such situations, you may be able to discuss the difficulties with your supervisor, or request that a health professional (such as a behavioural psychologist or GP) assess the person's needs.



## Organisational limitations

The organisation you work for may not have the capacity to cater to the needs of an individual. If this is the case, inform your supervisor of the identified need that is unable to be met so the person can be referred to a service that can meet this need.

If the person's individual plan does not address a need that the person requests and the need is something that you could meet, the person's needs should be assessed and their individual plan revised.

### Example

#### Identify situations where there may be risk and make appropriate referrals

After his wife dies in a car accident, Brian tries to pull himself together for the sake of his children. His wife died instantly in a head-on collision while driving. Brian thinks he is doing okay, but he is troubled by the traumatic nature of her death. Thoughts and images keep popping into his head. He tries to carry on with his life, but finds it increasingly difficult. His asthma seems to have worsened. He finds it difficult to get out of bed in the morning and do basic things like make breakfast. He does not feel like seeing anyone or doing anything, and wonders if life is worth living. His wife's parents offer to take care of the children for a while, but Brian feels they are really planning to try to take the children away from him.



When a friend, Julie, who is a community service worker, comes to visit him and explains that if he does not get help he may not be around to see his kids grow up, Brian decides to take action. Julie tells him that he is experiencing symptoms of unresolved grief and trauma, and that he needs to get help. She recommends that he see his doctor about his health concerns and ask for a referral to a counsellor to help him deal with his reactions to his wife's death.

## Summary

1. When a person loses someone close to them or something personally significant to them, they experience grief.
2. Loss and grief may affect people in many ways and also impact families and communities.
3. Grief includes a wide range of emotions, thoughts and behaviours. While a grieving person may experience many common feelings and reactions, it is important to remember that responses may differ.
4. You need to take into account cultural and other differences when supporting individuals.
5. Loss, grief and bereavement are highly stressful events that can have a range of impacts on a person's health and wellbeing. You need to recognise signs of negative health impacts and support the person to address these issues appropriately.
6. Disenfranchised grief occurs when a person's loss and grief is not acknowledged or recognised by others. You need to recognise signs of disenfranchised grief and acknowledge the loss to normalise the person's experience of grief and loss.
7. Modern approaches to loss and grief recognise that grief is a process that ideally ends with the bereaved individual coming to terms with and integrating their loss into their lives. It is important to understand how this occurs so you can support the person.
8. Identify situations where there may be risk to the health and safety of the person or other people and make appropriate referrals.
9. Identifying persons at risk of suicide and assessing the risk.
10. Duty of care to the person at risk of suicide.

## 2A Interact with individuals with empathy, sensitivity, professionalism and courtesy

A person who is living with loss often feels confused and disoriented. One of the most important things that you can do to help someone work through their loss and associated grief is to empathise with them and allow them to experience and express their feelings. It is only by experiencing and acknowledging their emotions that bereaved people are able to work towards acceptance. Saying things like, 'You should try to pull yourself together now' is not helpful. Always be prepared to listen without judgment. In doing so, you show respect for the person and acknowledge what they are experiencing.

Some communication strategies for helping you interact with people living with loss are described below.

Communication strategies that can help you interact with people coping with loss include:

- ▶ empathetic listening
- ▶ identifying and affirming the person's strengths and opportunities
- ▶ helping to manage overwhelming feelings and facilitating their coping styles
- ▶ focusing on identifying immediate needs and concerns
- ▶ facilitating informed choices
- ▶ demonstrating unconditional positive regard
- ▶ adopting a non-judgmental approach
- ▶ responding in a genuine way.

### Professional courtesy

All workers need to maintain professional courtesy to all individuals. This includes co-workers, people accessing the service and other contacts such as tradespeople. Courtesy is the showing of civility and respect to others in the way in which we interact and communicate with them. Here is a list of the most common forms of courtesy that needs to be part of the everyday activity in both home and working life.

#### Common forms of courtesy that need to be part of everyday activity

- ▶ Be respectful of all people
- ▶ Appearances count – maintain a tidy, professional appearance
- ▶ Be polite
- ▶ Maintain an appropriate tone of voice and communicate in a professional manner
- ▶ Be on time for work and appointments and notify others if you are running late
- ▶ Do not gossip about others



## Cultural values

People value many things about their culture, including their language, food, religious practice, sport and family life. Different cultures have different values that are usually based on tradition.

You can build good relationships with people by learning about the things they value in their culture; for example, food and dress choices. Do this by talking to them or looking at photo albums with them.

## Ceremonies and festivals

In most cultures, festivals and celebrations – like Chinese New Year, Easter, Anzac Day, Hanukkah and Greek National Days – are very important.

Learning about different cultural beliefs and customs can make the workplace interesting and fun. Encourage the person to maintain their traditions by celebrating special days.

## Dress

The way people dress may be influenced by their religion or culture. Some people only want to dress the way they have always dressed.

Respect people's choice of dress and encourage others to do the same. Be aware of your role in dealing with unwanted or derogatory comments about dress or appearance.

## Family structure

In many cultures, the male is the head of the home and is responsible for the family. In other cultures, the grandmother or mother is the matriarch (the female head of a tribe or family).

Be aware of which family member you need to contact about a person, but ensure you don't breach Australian laws and service standards. You may need to respectfully assert a person's right to direct their own care.

## Gender and sexuality

A person's gender is generally defined as male or female. Australia promotes equality between the sexes, whereas some cultures uphold traditional roles (e.g. women's husbands may be chosen for them). Attitudes to sexual preferences also vary: some cultures forbid homosexuality.

Understand that a person may be embarrassed about their sexuality or may treat you in a certain way because of your gender. Ensure you show respect for their values but are also clear about what behaviour is acceptable and what is not.

## Attitude to the elderly

In some cultures, especially Asian cultures, older people are particularly valued for their knowledge and age.

Treat all older people with respect. This may involve being patient and tailoring your communication to suit the individual.



## Family responses to grief

Most families have customs or unspoken rules that all members of the family are expected to follow. These often affect the way members express emotions and deal with emotionally difficult situations. You need to take into consideration the following when working with families.

### Influencing factors

- ▶ Family responses to grief and loss are influenced by a number of factors, including their:
  - cultural background, religious or spiritual beliefs
  - family norms
  - relationships within the family
  - levels of support.

### Different responses for different families

- ▶ Family responses to grief may be open and expressive, with members being supportive of one another, or they may be reserved and subdued, with each family member being left to cope in their own way. It is also important to recognise that there may be different needs within families; one family member may require more support than others.

### Do not make assumptions

- ▶ Do not assume that one method is better than another or that you can help people from inexpressive families to feel better by insisting they talk about and openly grieve their losses. Expectations of this kind may increase the emotional burden they are trying to deal with.

### Example

#### Identify and respect social, cultural, ethnic and spiritual differences

Tuyet is a person accessing the services of HACC service through her local council. She has cerebral palsy, and needs help with some personal care and home-based tasks, as well as community access support. Maggie is the worker who spends the most time with Tuyet. Maggie notices that Tuyet appears very fearful sometimes when they are out shopping. This is most apparent when there are groups of men in the vicinity, as Tuyet is jumpy and constantly looks over her shoulder. She walks close to Maggie in the shops and often puts her hand on Maggie's arm for reassurance. Maggie knows Tuyet lost some members of her family to violence in her home country before moving to Australia, but she is unsure whether Tuyet herself experienced the violence or trauma.



Rather than approach Tuyet directly, Maggie talks to her supervisor, who then works a shift with Maggie and Tuyet. The supervisor tactfully suggests to Tuyet that there are many support services available to help people who have had difficulties in their home countries. Tuyet decides to let the supervisor refer her to a counselling and support service designed to help people who have been victims of torture, trauma and violence.

Paying attention to all aspects of communication is essential when you are establishing a relationship with someone you support, or a colleague. If you are handling a difficult situation, your body language could make the situation worse. Your tone of voice, choice of words, facial expressions and gestures are all very important when communicating. Below is a list of nonverbal communication considerations.

### **Nonverbal communication to consider**

Your tone of voice and whether it is pleasant, friendly, annoyed or angry.

The volume of your voice and whether it is loud or soft.

The pace of your voice and whether it is fast or slow.

Your body language and whether you are nodding your head in agreement or pointing your finger.

Your facial expressions, such as whether you are smiling or frowning.

## **Apply empathetic listening skills**

In your work with the grieving person, displaying empathy means being able to identify with a person's feelings and experiences. It is not necessary to agree with the person, but you should try to understand their point of view. It is important that empathy is genuine and expressed in a way that is meaningful to the person you are communicating with.

Some ways that applying empathetic listening can help when working with a grieving person are shown below.

Applying empathetic listening skills helps to:

- ▶ show support and compassion
- ▶ build rapport, respect and trust
- ▶ validate what the person is feeling
- ▶ support the person to express their concerns and emotions.

## **Empathetic skills and their applications**

Listening in an empathetic way helps you understand a person's circumstances and the context of their grief. The context of a loss may influence the way a person responds to loss and grief. Factors to take into account include socioeconomic circumstances, level of support, whether the death was expected, family relationships and the age and health of the deceased (including their mental health). The following outlines some empathetic listening skills you can apply when dealing with the grieving person.

### **Active listening and observing the person**

Active listening involves listening with your full attention, focusing on understanding what the person is saying and what concerns they have. Observing the person and listening carefully to them can help you determine whether higher levels of support are required; for example, if a person shows signs of depression, you can refer them to an appropriate mental health professional.



## Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 3A Identify individuals who experience difficulty with grief and trauma and link or refer them to options for further help as needed**
- 3B Provide information about grief and bereavement support services and resources**
- 3C Identify, suggest or use strategies for formal and informal grief and bereavement support**
- 3D Obtain feedback from individuals to confirm that options are clearly understood**
- 3E Maintain confidentiality in line with organisational practices**

## Offer support and information

To provide effective support, you must be able to identify a person's individual needs, provide information about informal and formal support options, and help the person to choose the options and strategies that best suit them. When providing support, you must adhere to organisational policies and procedures, including maintaining the person's confidentiality.

It is important for the support worker to have detailed knowledge of the common reactions to loss and the range of responses exhibited by the person who is experiencing grief or trauma. It is also important to identify the individuals that may be at risk of self-harm or suicide and who to refer them to.

## 3B Provide information about grief and bereavement support services and resources

An important part of your role in supporting the person who is grieving is to identify the services and resources that are available to help them through the grieving process. You need to be able to research appropriate support options and give the person enough information to make informed decisions about the services they need. You also need to be familiar with your organisation's referral procedures so you can refer the person to other services as necessary.



### Identify grief and bereavement care services

You need to be aware of services that are relevant for the person who is grieving, especially those that are available in their own community. This means researching and keeping up to date with local grief and bereavement services.

As discussed, there are a wide range of services available to provide support and care for the person who is experiencing loss and grief. These include general practitioners, counsellors, support groups and telephone counselling services.

### Research available grief and bereavement care services

It is important that you are aware of the grief and bereavement care services available in the community. Most community services organisations keep a list of the referral sources they use on a regular basis. These may be kept in a database or in a file. Check your organisation's resources before looking elsewhere. You should also discuss options with your supervisor or co-workers who have experience working with grieving people. Information is also sourced from the internet and community networks, directories and resource listings, as outlined below.

#### Community resources

Community networks are an invaluable source of information about other services in the community. Networks may include colleagues in other community services organisations, as well as professional service providers such as doctors, psychologists and counsellors.

If your own organisation does not keep relevant or up-to-date listings, consult other service providers in the area to see who they recommend. This is also a useful way of updating your own organisation's resource listings.

Many communities create listings of all available community services for the benefit of their residents. These may be put together by local councils. If your community does not have such a resource, check your local telephone directory or Yellow Pages. Most libraries also hold community resource directories.



# 3C Identify, suggest or use strategies for formal and informal grief and bereavement support

To provide effective support, you must be able to identify a person's individual needs, provide information about informal and formal support options, and help the person to choose the options and strategies that best suit them. When providing support, you must adhere to organisational policies and procedures, including maintaining the person's confidentiality.

When providing support for grieving people, it is important to identify, suggest and use grief and bereavement support strategies that best suit the individual's needs. Grief and bereavement support strategies include both informal and formal sources of support.



Most people experiencing loss and grief find ways to work through their grief using their informal support network, including family and friends; however, some may need the additional formal support offered by doctors, counsellors and other service providers.

## Informal support options

When a person feels the need to talk about their loss, they usually seek informal support. People who have strong informal support networks of family, friends and others are less likely to experience difficulty in grieving than those who are more isolated. A supportive and caring environment can help a person manage their grief and deal with the many difficulties they face.

Part of your role is to identify the informal support that a person has available to them. This means determining who among the person's family, friends and acquaintances is available to provide comfort and practical help. Different groups of people who may be able to provide informal support are outlined below.

### Family and friends

- ▶ Family and friends have an important role to play in supporting a grieving person. They can spend time with them and help them deal with practical issues, especially in the initial stages of their grief. Most of all, they can listen and empathise with their loss. Having a strong personal support network helps a grieving person to cope.

### Neighbours

- ▶ Sometimes a grieving person lives alone, and a caring neighbour may be the only person around who can offer support. A helpful neighbour may help run errands, assist with shopping and meals or take on some child-minding activities.

10

#### Quality of personal information

An organisation must take reasonable steps to ensure the personal information it collects is accurate, up to date and complete.

11

#### Security of personal information

An organisation must take reasonable steps to protect personal information it holds from misuse, interference and loss, and from unauthorised access, modification or disclosure. An entity has obligations to destroy or de-identify personal information in certain circumstances.

12

#### Access to personal information

Outlines an organisation's obligations when an individual requests to be given access to personal information held about them by the organisation.

13

#### Correction of personal information

Outlines an organisation's obligations in relation to correcting the personal information it holds about individuals.

## Privacy

Under privacy legislation, both the person and staff have the right to have their personal information kept private. You must have a reasonable purpose for collecting, storing, accessing and distributing information about a person. You must not collect general information about a person without having a specific reason for doing so that is related to service goals. Listed below are some general guidelines that demonstrate how organisations and individuals can comply with privacy legislation.

### Guidelines for maintaining confidentiality

- ▶ Avoid using names unnecessarily
- ▶ Be mindful that even a description of a person or worker may provide enough information to identify them
- ▶ Provide a valid reason for collecting, storing or distributing any personal information
- ▶ Keep personal information in locked filing cabinets and password-protected computer files
- ▶ Limit access to files and information
- ▶ Restrict the removal of written records from the organisation's premises
- ▶ Obtain a person's written consent to share their personal information
- ▶ Follow your organisation's policies and procedures regarding confidentiality

## Record-keeping policies and procedures

Your organisation's policies and procedures must address how documents are to be kept, and how staff can access, use and copy them. For example, there are particular laws relating to health records, records relating to disputes, or records relating to children in care. A manager must uphold federal and state government legislation in relation to record-keeping to ensure legal and ethical compliance.

Documentation you need to prepare or manage may include:

- ▶ care plans
- ▶ handover sheets
- ▶ communication books
- ▶ assessment tools
- ▶ time sheets
- ▶ care records
- ▶ progress notes
- ▶ incident or accident reports
- ▶ admission and discharge reports
- ▶ personnel files.

## Electronic and manual record keeping

While some organisations use manual record-keeping systems, most use an electronic record-keeping system, which makes it easier to capture information, generate reports and meet legal and taxation reporting requirements.

When setting up a record-keeping system in your service, you must consider the advantages and limitations of electronic versus manual systems and decide what is most appropriate for the needs of your organisation.

Information about electronic and manual recording keeping is provided below.

### Electronic record keeping

Most organisations use accounting software programs to simplify electronic record keeping and produce reports. Electronic record keeping also allows you to:

- ▶ record financial transactions, including income, expenses and payments to workers
- ▶ use less storage space
- ▶ easily generate pay records or inventory reports
- ▶ keep up with the latest tax rates, laws and rulings
- ▶ allows multiple people to access, update and add notes to records in real time
- ▶ backs up records and keeps them safe in case of fire or theft.

### Manual record keeping

Some organisations may want to use a simple, paper-based record-keeping system. The advantages of manual record keeping include:

- ▶ lower set up costs
- ▶ the ease of correcting entries as opposed to electronic systems that can leave complicated audit trails
- ▶ lower risk of data corruption
- ▶ lower risk of data loss, especially if records are stored in a fire-proof environment
- ▶ the avoidance of duplicate copies of the same records
- ▶ simple processes that do not require training in sophisticated software.



# 4A Monitor own stress level

Managing the risks associated with providing grief and bereavement support is the responsibility of both you and your employer. You must adopt self-care strategies to maintain your own health and wellbeing, and adhere to organisational guidelines for managing risks associated with your work.

It is important to work as part of the team and seek support from peers and supervisors.

## Identify and reflect on your own emotional responses

A support worker's environment is one in which there may have been a lot of suffering, pain, distress, anger and grief. Family members and friends place their own demands on the worker. There may be emotional issues surrounding the end of a person's life. For example, taking a person off a life-support system can be a very emotional experience for the bereaved person. For these reasons and more, workers must be trained to cope with death and bereavement.



Workers need to maintain a steady, professional manner and display understanding, warmth and empathy towards others. They should also look after their own health and wellbeing. As there is often little time to grieve or to talk about their own feelings with others, stress levels for workers are often high.

## Reactions to bereavement

Grief and loss may arouse in people many conflicting or bewildering feelings and emotions. Typical reactions include feeling sad, angry, relieved, stressed, tired, confused or guilty. The person may cry a lot and have trouble concentrating. The support worker dealing with family or carers after the death of a person may find the situation very emotional and suffer from related stress. The support worker will need to monitor their level of stress and be aware of a change in their own behaviour as a reaction to the workplace.

Unresolved grief may result in withdrawal from close or meaningful involvement with colleagues and other people. In extreme cases, it may contribute to long-term difficulties in personal relationships, inappropriate ways of dealing with emotional stresses, depression or physical illness.

After the death of a person, you may:

- ▶ have difficulty shifting from a curative approach to a palliative and supportive role where death is an inevitable and appropriate outcome
- ▶ suffer guilt if you feel that a diagnosis was missed or delayed
- ▶ suffer trauma if you are unable to relieve a person's difficult symptoms or intense distress for them, their family members and carers
- ▶ struggle to confront your own issues and emotions relating to death or loss.

## Debrief

You should have the opportunity to debrief after you have been involved in a stressful or critical incident, such as hearing about a person's stressful or traumatic experiences. Debriefing provides an opportunity for you to talk about what has happened and to express your concerns and feelings related to the incident or experience. Debriefing may be conducted by a supervisor or someone else trained to provide the service. Discussing your experience and reactions in a safe and supportive environment helps you to explore your concerns and recover more quickly.

Debriefing aims to:

- ▶ acknowledge what you have experienced
- ▶ encourage you to fully express reactions to and feelings about the stressful event or incident
- ▶ allow you to integrate your experience by talking about it and gaining clarity
- ▶ normalise your reactions to the event
- ▶ mobilise support resources both at work and at home
- ▶ provide information and prepare you for future reactions
- ▶ identify further sources of assistance, if necessary.

## Appropriate support

You should never feel that you are working in isolation or without support. There will be many circumstances when you will need back-up, and organisations should have resources to ensure this happens.

Appropriate personal support may include having a supervisor or colleague to talk to or being able to call on colleagues for assistance. It may also include being able to take time off work when necessary. Most community services organisations have policies and procedures in place outlining how staff should support each other during crises or when a worker requests help.

## External networks and expertise

External networks and expertise can provide organisations and workers with additional support and resources to help manage risks associated with stress-related disorders. Examples of external expertise and external networks are provided below.

### Expertise

External expertise may include professionals such as doctors, counsellors and psychologists, who can assist you to manage and recover from conditions such as burnout, vicarious traumatisation and compassion fatigue.

### Networks

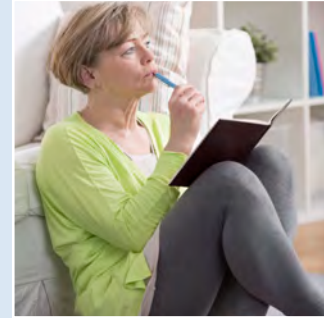
Networks and communities among staff of related community services organisations share information and resources, organise professional development and training opportunities and foster supportive relationships between groups and individuals.

**Example**

**Identify and respond to the need for supervision and debriefing**

Jenny keeps a self-reflection journal that helps her make sense of what she experiences at work. Her latest entry reads:

'Today when Mary talked about the death of her son, I felt completely overwhelmed. It reminded me of when my little brother died and the grief my whole family went through. I have never really allowed myself to experience such strong reactions before. I felt as though let Mary down because I was focusing on my emotions and not what she was going through. I could hardly say anything. I just sat there holding her hand and letting her cry. She talked a lot and afterwards was kind enough to say it was good to have someone to talk to who seems to understand and care. I wish I could have done more for her.'



Jenny tells her supervisor about this incident and how it made her feel. Her supervisor, Chris, is reassuring in acknowledging that it must have been very difficult for her in that situation and that her reaction was perfectly normal. She also says Jenny probably helped Mary more than she thinks. Chris suggests that Jenny may have some unresolved issues regarding her own grief and that she should consider seeing a grief counsellor. Chris tells Jenny that she is a valuable worker and that it is important that she looks after herself and always feels she can ask for help when she needs it.

## Practice task 15

1. List three ways effective supervision can reduce a support worker's stress.

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2. List two factors you need to address to meet your duty of care to the person you are supporting.

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3. List two positive effects of debriefing for the support worker.

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# 5B Identify where further support is required

As part of the process of reviewing and evaluating the grief and bereavement support that you provide, you need to consider whether a person's needs have changed over time and if they require further support. Take the below considerations into account when identifying if further support is required.

## Identify changing needs

- ▶ Try to encourage the person to collaborate with you in reviewing the services they receive
- ▶ Always be ready to provide information about the different sources of support available and help the person consider their options
- ▶ Grief is a natural response to loss and is a process that takes time to work through
- ▶ People may have high support needs immediately after their loss, but in most cases their need for grief and bereavement support decline over time
- ▶ Some people who access the service may require further support, especially those who experience trauma, develop a complex grief response or have concurrent mental health concerns
- ▶ People who access the service may have other needs that require attention, such as housing and financial support needs

## Revise plans

You should revise and update the person's support plans as their needs and circumstances change. Check with them on a regular basis to ensure the current support is relevant and assess what further support or information they may need. Some people will raise these issues themselves, asking for changes to be made or requesting additional support as needed. Others may not recognise the need, so encourage them to consider options or sources of support to meet their changing needs.

Make sure all changes to the person's support plan are documented so that all the members of your team know what changes have been made.

When identifying if a person needs further support, consider:

- ▶ whether all the person's needs have been accurately identified
- ▶ whether the current support is meeting the person's needs
- ▶ what additional needs the person has
- ▶ whether the person's needs have changed
- ▶ whether the person is willing to have their current support changed
- ▶ whether the organisation can meet further support needs or whether the person needs to be referred elsewhere
- ▶ what the expected outcomes of further support are
- ▶ how the person might benefit from further support
- ▶ what specific informal or formal support the person requires.

### Review outcomes

Reviewing the person's outcomes helps organisations and workers determine:

- ▶ whether the practices they are using are meeting the person's needs and helping them achieve their desired outcomes
- ▶ whether there are any problems with the practices being used
- ▶ whether the person would benefit from a change in approach
- ▶ whether workers need more training in the practices they are using.

Organisations must have procedures in place to evaluate their own services and make the required changes to better meet the person's needs.

### Review practices

Ask the following questions when reviewing practices:

- ▶ In what areas do current practices work well?
- ▶ Are there enough opportunities for the person to provide feedback?
- ▶ Do current practices address the person's individual needs and responses?
- ▶ Do current practices support a range of options for formal and informal support?
- ▶ What issues are likely to affect practices now and in the future?
- ▶ How does the service maintain practices that are based on industry standards or other benchmarks of best practice?
- ▶ Are practices supported by current and relevant policies and procedures?
- ▶ How regularly are practice policies and procedures reviewed and updated?

## Gather information

To review practices and evaluate their effectiveness, organisations should gather information from a range of sources, including workers, the person accessing the services, the person's significant others, other service providers, industry standards and best practice, and the person's records. Following is more information about each of these sources.

### Workers

Workers must carry out the practices set out by an organisation's policies and procedures, and are often the first to realise that a particular practice does not work or could be carried out in a more efficient and effective way. It is important that you have the opportunity to suggest improvements to your supervisor or in team meetings.

### The person accessing the services

The person accessing the services is the most important stakeholder. They have an important role to play in helping you review your practices. The people who access the services should be consulted on a regular basis to check if what you are doing meets their needs and what practices are or are not working for them.