



# Life After Loss:

## GRIEF SUPPORT AND RESOURCES FOR CO-WORKERS

*The death of a colleague leaves both a personal and professional void in the workplace. We spend many hours of our lives with our co-workers. We form relationships with them, even if those relationships consist merely saying hello as we pass by someone's desk each morning. A co-worker's death can mean the loss of someone who we depend on to help us do our job, but also the loss of a friend. The death of a colleague we barely knew can also affect us as the reality of death comes close to home.*

The effects of loss will be determined by many factors including but not limited to:

- *The length of time you spent working together*
- *The nature of your relationship*
- *The age of your colleague*
- *The suddenness of their death*
- *Other personal challenges you may be facing at this time of the loss.*

### ***The grief process:***

You may feel that you are riding on a roller coaster of shifting emotions. Most people go through these stages not in linear steps but in unpredictable ways.

Here are some common typical grief reactions. Remember they are not typical for all people:



#### ***Physical***

Tightness or heaviness in chest  
Oversensitivity to noise  
Fatigue  
Nausea  
Fainting  
Twitches  
Vomiting  
Dizziness  
Weakness  
Headaches  
Elevated BP  
Rash  
Foot tapping  
Restlessness  
Indigestion  
Muscle Aches  
Insomnia



#### ***Cognitive***

Difficulty concentrating  
Confusion  
Nightmares  
Uncertainty  
Blaming  
Disorientation  
Forgetfulness  
Lethargy  
Boredom  
Spacing out  
Racing thoughts  
Disbelief



#### ***Emotional***

Fear  
Numbness  
Sadness  
Guilt  
Panic  
Denial  
Anxiety  
Irritability  
Overwhelmed  
Intense anger  
Discouraged  
Loss of emotional balance



#### ***Behavioral***

Withdrawal  
Unable to rest  
Pacing  
Lack of intimacy  
Eating too much or too little  
Tearfulness  
Change in speech patterns



#### ***Spiritual***

Emptiness  
Loss of meaning  
Doubt  
Unforgiving  
Loss of direction  
Cynicism



While some staff will quickly return to normal functioning, some who were closer to the person who dies, or those for whom the death triggered possible painful memories, might exhibit some of the following:

- *Decreased concentration and memory*
- *Sleep disturbances and fatigue*
- *Changes in eating habits*
- *Sadness and tearfulness*
- *Headaches, muscle tension and stomach aches*
- *Irritability and frustration*
- *Depression and emptiness*

On a team level you may find yourself and your co-workers experiencing:

- *Decreased individual and team morale,*
- *Strained staff relationships,*
- *Reduced productivity,*
- *Low energy and poor concentration,*
- *Higher rates of absenteeism*

## ***Supporting an employee after a death***



It's a good idea to:

- *Talk to staff regularly to see how they're coping*
- *Signpost staff to any support that's available to them*



It might be appropriate to honor the person who died with others at work. For example, you might consider:

- *Organizing a book of condolence for staff to share their memories of the person who died*
- *Holding an event or service to honor the person who died, inviting the family or next of kin as well, if appropriate*



Supporting an employee after a death can help them:

- *Feel valued*
- *Reduce their stress or anxiety*
- *Avoid or reduce sick leave*
- *Keep a good working relationship*
- *Keep the workplace productive*

It's important to communicate with your employee to ask what support they need from you, and also to let them know what support you can offer.



## *Advice for Friends & Family*

- 1** | Offer solidarity through listening, not advice giving.
- 2** | **It is not helpful to say: “It could have been worse” or any statements starting with “At least.”**
- 3** | **SPEND TIME WITH YOUR LOVED ONE.**
- 4** | REASSURE HIM OR HER THAT THEY ARE SAFE.
- 5** | ***Offer practical support and help him/her with everyday tasks like cleaning, cooking, running errands.***
- 6** | **Give them some private time.**
- 7** | Don't take their anger or irritability personally.
- 8** | Avoid judgment about the person's actions during this time.
- 9** | ***Remember they are sensitive and may misinterpret or over-react to some of the things you may say.***
- 10** | BE AWARE THAT THEIR MEMORY OR CONCENTRATION MAY BE AFFECTED.
- 11** | Keep up regular, interested, and caring contact.
- 12** | **IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS ABOUT THEIR SAFETY, DON'T AVOID ASKING. CALL YOUR GP OR A MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR TO PROVIDE THEM WITH EXTRA SUPPORT AND EVALUATION.**



Never forget that you are not a professional. It is very hard supporting a person who is going through grief and containing their emotions. Always remember to offer professional sources of support.

There are various ways of getting support through exterior sources.

#### **At The LightHouse Arabia, we offer:**

- Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training programs to equip individuals (Adults and Teens) and organizations with the skills to identify and assist someone who is developing a mental health challenge, or is experiencing a mental health crisis
- Crisis Resilience and Crisis Response services
- Mental health and wellness seminars for corporations.

## ***Helpful Resources:***

### **Vlogs, Podcasts and Videos:**

- **Understanding Grief**

by Farah Dahabi (LCSW), Clinical Social Worker and Mental Health First Aid UAE Director, The LightHouse Arabia

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y\\_asHc\\_hfqo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_asHc_hfqo)

- **Grief During Times of COVID-19**

with Aisling Prendergast (MSc), Psychologist and Grief Support Services Lead and Juan Van Wyk (MSc), Clinical Psychologist, The LightHouse Arabia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vTcONXbYkNU>

- **Journey Through Grief** by Aisling Prendergast (MSc),

Psychologist and Grief Support Services Lead, The LightHouse Arabia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ExX2BDReaQ0>

- **We Don't "move on" from Grief. We Move Forward with it**

by Nora McInerney

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=khkJkR-ipfw>

- **The Journey of Grieving**

with Dr. Edith Eva Eder

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cwdo8\\_qwjog&t=371s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cwdo8_qwjog&t=371s)

### **Book:**

- *The Year of Magical Thinking* by Joan Didion
- *It's OK that You're Not OK* by Megan Devine
- *The Wild Edge of Sorrow* by Francis Weller
- *Dancing at the Pity Party* by Tyler Feder
- *The After Grief* by Hope Edelman
- *Levels of Life* by Julias Barn



## Grief Support Groups:

We are honored to offer a range of free-of-cost grief support groups for the community. A one-time grief consultation will need to be done, prior to joining a grief support group.

It can be arranged by sending an email to:

**E.** [events@lighthousearabia.com](mailto:events@lighthousearabia.com)

or by calling The LightHouse Arabia on

**T.** +971 (0)4 380 2088



**ONLINE  
SUPPORT GROUP**

**\*Kindly note, all of our grief support groups are currently being offered online via Zoom.**



### ***Motherless Daughters:***

A supportive space where adult women who have lost their mothers can share their experiences.



### ***Partner Loss:***

A safe and supportive space for individuals who have lost their partners (married or unmarried). This group aims to provide participants with a space to speak openly about their grief alongside others who have shared experiences.



### ***Little Lifetimes:***

For pregnancy and infant loss, this support group is for parents who are grieving the loss of a child. You do not need to go through grief alone.



### ***Surviving After Loss to Suicide (SALS):***

For individuals who are grieving the death of someone to suicide.



### ***Adult Grief:***

A small group open to men and women who are grieving the death of someone significant to them.



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