



# Understanding... Bereavement

When someone close to us dies, we probably experience the most severe form of loss in our lives. Usually, this is experienced with not just one feeling. This is a normal and natural process that may take some time to get through.

## **What is Bereavement?**

Bereavement is a natural process of adjusting to loss, which must be allowed to happen, and it is different for everyone. You may experience one or more of a range of feelings including the following:

### **Shock and confusion**

If your loss is sudden, you may experience some degree of shock. This can be seen as a natural anaesthetic to protect you from overwhelming pain. Under the pressure of such an event you may feel confused and find it difficult to manage as you normally would.

### **Denial**

You may act as if nothing has happened. You may find it difficult to accept that the person has died. Denial can take a number of forms, including constantly talking about the person and behaving as if they were still alive.

### **Guilt**

You may feel guilty, perhaps for still being alive or for feeling in some way responsible for the death. You may experience regret, disappointment or have a sense that you have missed an opportunity to express your feelings for them.

### **Anger**

This is a common response to situations of loss and can be a frightening emotion to deal with. You may feel angry toward the dead person for dying, or perhaps at others who you believe might have been responsible or even those who have not suffered a loss.

### **Depression**

As you begin to accept that the person has died, you may well feel depressed recognising that so much has now changed. It might seem to you that what has happened is unfair.

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## Helping Yourself

It is important to have support during this time and to try to come to terms with your feelings.

At some point in the grieving process, you will start to come to terms with your loss and engage more readily with life and its events. However, occasionally, the bereavement process gets stuck and you may find that you are still grieving intensely, long after the event. Or, you may feel stuck in a different way by not being able to react to the loss at all, perhaps to the point of not being able to cry. In these situations, you need to find some help. Parents, friends and family can often be supportive. On the other hand, you may be concerned about worrying them or think that they will not understand in which case you may want to consider seeking support from someone who is not directly involved in the situation. A list of local and University sources of support can be found at the end of this leaflet.

The Student Support Team is available to talk to you about any loss that you may have experienced recently, or in the past.

## Helping Others

Sometimes all a bereaved person wants is to be heard without interruption or being offered solutions. Listening to a friend or partner who has been bereaved makes you feel you should say or do something. Often, just being there and giving your full attention is enough. Allow the person to express their feelings openly. Attempting to distract the bereaved from their grief through forced cheerfulness is not helpful. Anger is a common response to grief. Avoid being defensive, and listen.



## GETTING SUPPORT

### In the University:

You can talk confidentially to the Dean of Student Affairs or other members of the Student Support Team.

Email: [student.support@ncl.edu.my](mailto:student.support@ncl.edu.my)

Webform: [studentsupport.newcastle.edu.my](http://studentsupport.newcastle.edu.my)

Or make an appointment at the Student Office.

### Outside the University:

Your GP or family doctor can be a useful first point of contact. In some cases, your doctor will refer you for more specialised help and support. Sometimes it is easier to talk to someone over the phone.

### *The Befrienders Johor Bahru*

The Befrienders offers confidential emotional support through a helpline and email service.

Helpline (1pm to 12am): 07 33 123 00

Email: [sam@befriendersjb.org](mailto:sam@befriendersjb.org)

Website: <http://www.befriendersjb.org/>

### *Hospital Permai*

Trunk Line/Operator: 07 231 1000

Emergency (BDM): 07 231 1170

## URGENT HELP OR SUPPORT

### *Emergency Services*

If you are worried about your safety or feel at risk of harming yourself, or if you are worried about the safety of a fellow student, you need to access help immediately.

If you feel your life is in imminent danger, you should call 999 or go to Accident and Emergency at the nearest hospital.

For emergencies on campus, call NUMed Security.

NUMed Security (24/7): 07 555 3881/3984/3985

### *Out-of-Hours Help*

Out-of-hours on weekdays and on week-ends, you may call the NUMed Senior Officer-of-the-Day emergency number.

NUMed Senior Officer-of-the-Day: 011 1231 1276

