

## What Can Help

**Look after yourself** – as you can see above – the stress that comes with death of someone you know, seriously impacts on your health and wellbeing. Take some time out to recover and relax – try and use some of the following coping strategies:

**Talk to someone** – it can be hard to open up, but try and share your thoughts with someone you trust – a friend, family member, colleague or health professional. They may have helpful advice – but just acknowledging how tough it is for you can help.

**Write it down** - Writing down your feelings can help – you don't need to show it to anyone but it can help you work out what the main thing is that is worrying you, and then you can look at how to address this. Putting the thoughts in writing takes them for that moment out of your head. Keep adding to it. If you have any doubt – you will be able to look back and see just how far you have come.

**Take Breaks** – give yourself permission to step away from those difficult conversations, leave the room or go to the toilet, calm yourself and go back to it when you feel calm and ready. Limit social media and news – especially in this pandemic – it can be overwhelming and raise your stress and anxiety levels

**Look After Yourself** – Eat healthily and regularly, exercise or meditate, listen to music, read a book, walk the dog – whatever makes you feel good. It need only be for a few minutes but it is a few minutes of healing.

**Take it Easy on Yourself** – Change your self- talk:

Listen to what you're saying to yourself	Challenge your self-talk.	Make a list of the positive things about yourself.
Notice what your inner voice is saying. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is your self-talk mostly positive or negative?</li> <li>Each day, make notes on what you're thinking.</li> </ul>	Ask yourself things like: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is there actual evidence for what I'm thinking?</li> <li>What would I say if a friend were in a similar situation?</li> <li>Can I do anything to change what I'm feeling bad about?</li> </ul>	Remind yourself: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I got through this morning</li> <li>Tomorrow will be better</li> <li>I have managed really difficult situations</li> <li>I can manage this a day at a time</li> </ul>

**Step Back & Breathe** - you can't do everything. Make a list of the things you need to get done, and work out a timetable that will help you get there. When you're going through a stressful situation, ask yourself: 'How important is this? Will it matter in the long run?' 'Will it really matter if I don't do this?'

Based on information from <https://au.reachout.com>

## Covid-19 Self Help



The possibility of someone you know dying in this pandemic is very real – it may be a friend, colleague, neighbour, patient, or family member.

When someone you know dies, it can turn your life upside down. Often we feel that our response is not normal or 'right in some way.'

The reality is we all react differently – but it sometimes helps to know that what you are experiencing is not uncommon, and you may be able learn from others what can help.

We all know that we are going to experience bereavement at some point – but whilst our brain can acknowledge that, our emotional response can seem overwhelming at times of loss. Especially if we experience multiple losses

### People react differently to death

When someone dies, it is the most stressful event you can experience – especially if it is someone close to you. We all deal differently with death and it can feel like an emotional rollercoaster at times.

Things that impact on how we deal with death include:

**Cultural background:** Different cultural groups deal with death and grief in different ways. This may include how you express your grief, the use of rituals and ceremonies, and different rules with regard what is considered respectful. Those around us may not be aware and so it may be helpful to explain, or tolerate that lack of knowledge.

**Gender:** It is common in our society for men & women to respond differently- women are often more able to share their feelings with others, cry more openly, and talk about what is happening. Men sometimes are less likely to do this, may appear flippant or deny their sadness – using physical activity to deal with their grief

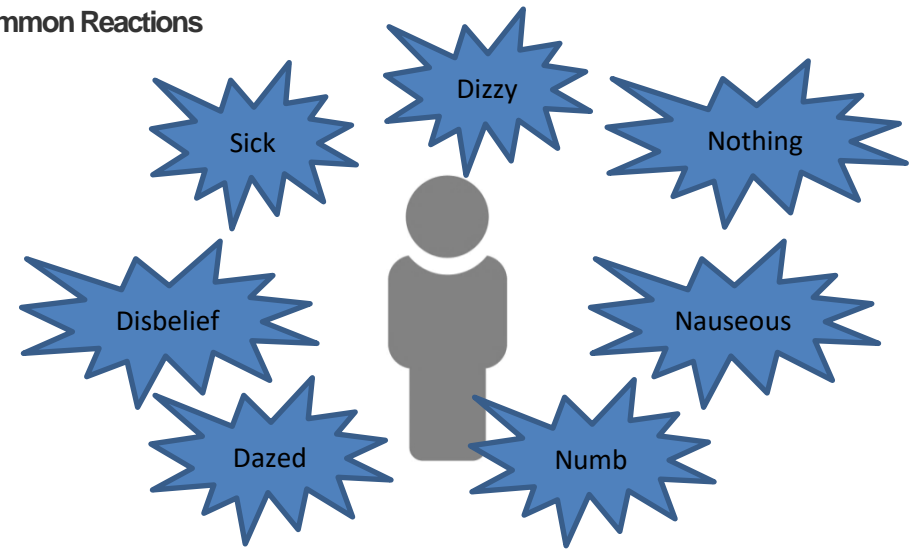


**Age:** Young children struggle to understand that the person isn't coming back, or the reasons for this. (This can be the case throughout primary school years). As we get older, despite the fact we understand the person has died it does not alter the fact that you can struggle to accept this.

**Profession:** When a patient/service user you care for dies, it can bring about many emotions. Sadness that they were not able to recover, self-reproach and questioning as to whether you could have done more, and sadness for those left behind. In inpatient services, especially long stay – it alters the ward dynamic and it can feel difficult to support others. Sometimes, you may feel relief as the individual is no longer suffering, but this can bring sadness too.

**Relationship:** Depending on who has died, this impacts differently in so many ways. If someone close dies, the emotional intensity can be huge, our world is turned upside down and it changes all your future plans. This new loss may remind you of earlier losses you've had, which may bring up past emotions and grief

### Common Reactions



**Grieving** –When the initial impact wears off, then we start to grieve. Again, we all do this differently. Try not to worry about what you are coping, nor compare yourself with anyone else. The reality is, grief impacts on all aspects of our life –

Physical	Mental	Emotional
Headaches, Fatigue Aches Nausea	Hypervigilant to own health Absentminded Poor concentration Confused Poor memory.	Sad Anger Disbelief Resentful Despair Guilt Lonely
Behavioural	Social	Spiritual
Changes to sleeping patterns Vivid dreams Nightmares, Appetite. Changes Isolating self Unusual emotional reactions Crying..	People may avoid you- they may not know what to say or how to help They may have unusual thoughts about you being infected (Covid-19) You may feel you have to be strong for family or colleagues, you may want to be alone	Your beliefs about a just world or a God who helps may be challenged You may struggle to have faith in the things that you once believed in. You may be angry with people who believe in a greater good or afterlife