

## When Someone You Know Has Died

When the news of a death reaches you, whether you were closely connected to the person or not, it is important to remember that there is no right or wrong reaction to this loss. The way that you grieve will be influenced by some things such as: the nature of the death; the relationship you had with the person who died; your own previous experience of death; your individual personality and how you cope; the support you have from others around you and from the extent to which your life is affected in response to the news and impact of the death.

Some common reactions that people experience when someone close dies are:

**Shock:** This might mean, for you, feeling numb, feeling nothing, finding it difficult to concentrate or think clearly.

**Guilt:** This might mean rethinking what contact you had with the person who died, times when you said or didn't say something that you now regret.

**Fear:** When someone who is young dies unexpectedly, feelings of fear and anxiety are common. You may notice that you are more worried than usual about the wellbeing of others. Feelings of being vulnerable and anticipating terrible things may emerge for you in your thoughts and/or dreams.

**Sadness:** Feeling sad in response to someone who is no longer alive, who you miss or who you didn't know very well but are sad at the circumstances of their unexpected death are very normal.

**Anger:** It may be that you are noticing feeling more angry than usual about your life being disrupted, about the unfairness of sudden death or with the person who has died for not taking better care.

These are some common reactions to the death of someone. You may notice changes in how you feel and how your body responds. For example, you may experience headaches, tiredness and chills. You may also notice changes in your normal daily behaviour. This might mean that your sleep pattern is temporarily disrupted. You may find that you're eating pattern changes or you consume more alcohol than is normal.

## How to Help Yourself

•Death is often surrounded by silence but it is actually helpful to talk with trusted friends and family about what has happened and about the person who has died.

•Remember that people may have all sorts of different reactions that you might not be aware of, so for yourself and others, don't distance yourself from contact. You can get support and you can give support to others by being around.

•There is no timescale in which to feel something. Let whatever reaction (s) you are experiencing take place. These reactions may be noticeable from changes in your feelings, dreams, thoughts or behaviour.

•Please be careful of drugs and/or alcohol as ways of coping when you might not feel your normal self. They have a negative effect on your mood so the combination of them with shock or upset, that are normal reactions following bereavement, tends to make you feel worse than usual.

•If you don't want to talk to others about what is on your mind, try writing your thoughts and feelings down on paper. This is one way of letting go of anything that is troubling you.

•Try to exercise – e.g. swimming, running, walking, cleaning, kicking a ball, as physical exercise can help you to let go of tension you may be experiencing.

•If you are having trouble coping, it only means that, in this instance, it is hard for you to make sense of your reactions. Please feel free to contact the Student Counsellor and arrange an appointment.

<b>Samaritans 24 hour Telephone Support</b>	<b>116 123 (free)</b>
<b>Console 24 hour suicide helpline</b>	<b>1800 247 247</b>
<b>Student Health Centre, IADT</b>	<b>01 239 4760</b>