



## Grieving for someone you didn't know very well

Death affects everyone differently and just because the person who died may not have been a close friend or relative, doesn't mean that you will feel their death any less. Grief is not straightforward, and we can't make assumptions about how someone will experience the death of someone who felt significant to them..

Our lives are full of people who we form different connections with: from close friends and family to staff and students in school, online friends, to celebrities we follow. It's common for people to believe that because they did not have a close personal relationship with someone, they are wrong to be experiencing grief emotions. But this is not the case. Sometimes we can have very strong feelings about a person's death, regardless of how well we knew them.

These feelings are valid and, as with any grief, can include all sorts of emotions and physical feelings, such as headaches or tiredness. You may feel sad at their death, angry they're no longer here, confused about what happened, or even guilty about not knowing them better. There is no right or wrong way to feel. These emotions might also affect how you behave. For example, you might feel like you don't want to engage in things that remind you of the person, you may need some extra support from those around you, or you may try to keep yourself busy to distract yourself from thinking about them. These are all normal reactions.

Although it is very common, grieving for someone you didn't know well might be confusing for those around you. You may find people ask why you're so upset when you weren't close to them. This can be really hard and might make you feel isolated and alone. But it's important to remember that just because others aren't feeling the same way, doesn't mean that how you're feeling is wrong. You might want to remind them that grief is unique to everyone, and this is what you're experiencing right now.

Some people find that experiencing a death can bring back feelings from past bereavements. This is called revisiting grief and may cause you to worry that you're not coping as well as you had thought, but that isn't the case: you are experiencing a 'grief burst', which can bubble up from time to time throughout our lives. Grief bursts can be triggered by lots of things: changes in your life; new experiences; old memories, and other bereavements – and although they can take us by surprise, grief bursts are part of the way grief behaves over time.

What's important to remember is that revisiting grief rarely lasts as long as you may have experienced when you were first bereaved. Don't feel worried to tell someone that it's brought back feelings from a past bereavement. Just as when you were first bereaved, having good support around you makes a big difference.





It's also common for a bereavement to make you start thinking about the big questions in life, like 'what happens after you die?'. Generally, when we're younger we don't tend to think about these things because our brains aren't yet developed enough to make sense of anything more than what's happening in the here and now. As we get older, we start to wonder more about these big questions and try to find answers that make sense to us.

Experiencing bereavement as a teenager may also make you think about your own life and those around you. It can often be the first experience we have to make us realise that death is a part of life and at some point, it will happen to everyone. This can make the world feel quite a scary place. You aren't alone in these thoughts and questions – it's common for young people to think about these things, and most people can usually move forward in life without thoughts of death and dying become overwhelming.. Again, it helps to talk about it with other people and get their support. If you're finding the death of someone in your life hard, and want some tips on how to manage these big feelings, you might want to check out our other videos 'What can help' and 'How to hack your brain' for tips and advice.

