

UNDERSTANDING LOSS

Understanding what you (or someone else) is feeling is an important part of making sense of loss. This document explores ways to cope with grief and gently ease the pain.

- Use comforting activities such as colouring, scheduling self-care, listening to music, watching a film, spending time with family or friends, and leaning on supportive communities (including trusted organisations or online support groups).
- Support people who are grieving by not avoiding the person who has died. It can feel scary to mention them, but many people appreciate it. Invite gentle conversation about memories, ask questions (including stories from before you were born), and listen with care.
- Expect emotions to feel intense – this is normal. Cry if you need to; releasing emotion can help.
- Send a simple “I care” message, check in regularly, and offer practical support.
- Do more listening than talking. You don’t need perfect words – your presence matters.
- Be patient. Adjusting to a significant loss takes time and emotional effort. Healing is possible, but it isn’t quick.
- Encourage professional support if things feel overwhelming or unmanageable.
- Discourage self-blame or blaming others; gently refocus on compassion and what can be done now.
- Support problem-solving where helpful: What needs doing? What are the options? Who can help?
- Hold hope for the future and remind the person that they can get through this, one step at a time.
- Be honest about reality. Don’t pretend everything is okay – acknowledge the pain while offering steady support.
- Try to put yourself in the other person’s shoes and respond with empathy, warmth, and respect.