



Grief and Loss



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What does grief and loss mean?

- Grief means feeling sad after losing someone or something important.
- Loss can happen when someone dies, a pet goes away, when life changes or family or friends move away.
- People around me or my support worker may leave.



How does it change people's lives?

- I may feel sad, angry, or confused.
- I may feel alone.
- Daily routines may feel different to me.

Why is it important?

- Everyone feels grief and loss in their own way.
- Talking about it helps people heal and feel supported.

What are the signs?

What should I look for?

- I may cry or have sad feelings.
- I may not want to talk or do usual things.
- I may not sleep well or eat more or less food.



How might a person with Down syndrome show these signs?

- I may seem quieter or upset.
- I may show anger or be worried instead of being sad.
- I may have trouble understanding what happened.

Are signs the same or different for everyone?

- Everyone feels grief and loss differently.
- Feelings can change from day to day.



How does it feel?

I may feel:

- Tired, heavy, or upset.
- Lonely, confused, or angry.



How can my family and support people understand these feelings?

- Be patient and kind with me.
- Use clear words to explain what happened.
- Give time to talk with me or share memories.

What helps?

What can I do to feel better?

- I can talk about the person or thing I miss.
- I can look at photos or do something that helps me remember.
- I can take walks or rest when needed.



What can my family and support people do to support me?

- Listen and comfort me with hugs or kind words.
- Assist me to keep my daily routines.
- Help me take part in goodbye rituals, like funerals or memory time.

What can health professionals do to help?

- Give me counselling or emotional support.
- Help me understand and cope with feelings.

When should I get help?

What might happen if the problem gets worse?

- I may feel sad all the time.
- I may have trouble sleeping or eating.
- I may feel angry or withdrawn for a long time.



Who should I talk to?

- Doctor, counsellor, psychologist, or support worker.

What to do in an emergency?

- If the person talks about wanting to harm themselves or feels unsafe, **call 000** or go to hospital.



Everyday care

What small steps can help each day?

- I can talk about feelings.
- I can eat healthy foods and get plenty of rest.
- I can spend time with people who care about me.



Are there things that might make the problem worse?

- Being alone too much.
- Not talking about my feelings.
- Keeping too much stress or change to myself.

What helps people stay well?

- I can share memories.
- I can do things that bring me comfort or happiness.

More information

Where can I go for help?

- Lifeline:

 **13 11 14 – 24-hour support**

- GriefLine:

 **1300 845 745 – talk about grief and loss**

- Down Syndrome Australia:

 **www.downsyndrome.org.au**

Who can support me and my family?

- Family, friends, support workers, counsellors, and local community services.
- My local state or territory Down syndrome association.

Disclaimer

This information is general. It is not medical or legal advice. Talk to your GP or health professional about what is right for you. Down Syndrome Australia and nib foundation are not responsible for decisions made using this information.

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