

#HospiceLink

[hospicetaranaki.org.nz](https://www.hospicetaranaki.org.nz) | paula.king@hospicetaranaki.org.nz

GRIEF AND LOSS

We all experience tough times of change, loss and grief at some time in our life. The loss is defined by the person experiencing the loss, not anyone else.

After any loss, grief can throw people off balance for a while. It can shake them to the core. It can be very up and down like a roller coaster ride. For most people, griefs pain will gradually ease up bit by bit as they draw on their internal resilience's, use support and put into place some positive coping strategies. Gradually they adjust to what's happened. Their life slowly starts to grown out around their grief. The reality is that grief doesn't have a time line. Grief reactions aren't predictable. It ebbs and flows. Grief can be "messy". It has its own agenda! Grief is not just emotional. It affects how a person feels, thinks, behaves—even what they believe. A significant loss will always shape the person and how they see the world.

<https://www.facebook.com/bbcplayer/videos/bbc-stories-like-minds-on-bbc-iplayer/2168915343327846/>

Grief can be likened to being hit by a wave

It comes and goes

Crashes in on you all at once

Can bruise and hurt you

Feel out of control

Be rough and be gentle

Creep up on you unexpectedly

It can be...

- Brief
- Intense, feel like it will go on forever
- Scary
- Overwhelming
- Delayed and hit you at a later time
- Hard to explain

Everyone grieves differently because we are all different

Common grief reactions may include -

- Crying
- Shock
- Feeling sick
- Feeling Dizzy
- Nauseous
- Dazed
- Numb
- Empty, be in complete disbelief about what has happened
- Feel nothing initially (a completely normal reaction), before you eventually start to feel various emotions
- React strangely – for example, some people laugh

Upcoming Education

Palliative Care lecture series

1 June 2023:

The Role of Spirituality in Palliative Care

Richard Egan

Associate Professor Co-Director Social & Behavioural Research Unit

Department of Preventive & Social Medicine, Dunedin School of Medicine

[Click here](#) to watch them wherever you are.

Time: 07:30am - 08:30am

Syringe Driver Competency

Wednesday 7 June: 1 pm - 3 pm

Syringe Driver Refresher

Wednesday 14 June: 1pm-2.30pm

[Click here](#)

Supporting someone who is crying

If a client/whanau member is tearful or crying, their distress is obvious. Some cry more easily than others. Some rarely cry, if at all. Some may be embarrassed, while others won't care what people think. Interestingly, research tells us that tears release endorphins which can leave people feeling better emotionally. Physically, however, crying can often be exhausting.

- Respect their privacy – if possible find an appropriate, quiet place to be, without others around and being noticed
- Keep tissues handy – have boxes of tissues ready to offer – at Hospice we have boxes of tissues strategically placed everywhere!
- Better out than in– this wisdom has the backing of research – give people the time they need to cry. Realise that sometimes tears when they come can be hard to stop. Be patient...
- Watch your body language – show compassion and respect for the person, not disapproval or annoyance
- As they cry....just calmly be with them, reassure them, silence is okay, offer some water or a hot drink, offer for them to have someone they know to be with them " Can I contact anyone, get someone in to be with you"
- Don't gossip about it
- Make sure professional boundaries are respected
- Call in extra support if needed

Complicated Grief

Losing someone close to us can be as painful as it gets. But if the sharp pain fails to lift, it might be what's called "complicated grief."

For a small number of people, grief can become prolonged and complicated. The pain and distress of their loss doesn't ease up gradually, or at all. Instead, their reactions may intensify and disrupt their everyday life, relationships, and work. Their loss may have happened many years ago. When grief is prolonged and complicated people find they can not move forward and indeed some people feel they don't want to. They can get "stuck". This is when it is important to get assistance from a counsellor, psychologist, or GP – who may be able to help them to slowly move forward in healthy ways. Ongoing understanding, patience, and support will be needed from those around them who they trust.

If you have any patients or families, you feel may benefit from some additional support to manage psychosocial needs, loss and grief. Please remember we have the Hospice Family Support person who is available to be accessed. Please fill in the Palliative Care Consult Service Form or contact Kelly Moore.

Other resources that may be helpful!

Coping with Loss and Grief – Helpful Tips

Making a memory box

Supporting the person with Dementia to grieve

Supporting a person with Dementia during a bereavement

BRAIN TEASER

Each month our newsletter will have a puzzle, activity or brainteaser. Submit your answers to Paula

Last months answer was "A Map"
Congratulations to Pat Wynd – Maida Vale !!

This months brain teaser:

My voice is tender, my waist is slender and I'm often invited to play. Yet wherever I go I must take my bow or else I have nothing to say. What am I?

