

What Are Grief and Bereavement?

- **Grief** is the natural emotional response to loss, particularly the loss of someone close.
- **Bereavement** refers to the period of mourning and adjustment following a death.

Grief is not a disorder – it's a process. But when unmanaged, it can significantly affect your mental and emotional well-being.

Emotional and Psychological Responses to Grief

People grieve in different ways. Common reactions include:

- Sadness or deep sorrow
- Anger or guilt
- Confusion or disbelief
- Loneliness or isolation
- Relief (especially after prolonged illness)
- Anxiety about the future
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions

These are all normal – but when grief becomes overwhelming or prolonged, it may evolve into a mental health concern.

When Grief Becomes Complex

Complicated or Prolonged Grief affects about 10% of bereaved individuals and may include:

- Intense longing or preoccupation with the deceased
- Difficulty accepting the death
- Avoidance of reminders
- Inability to engage in daily life

Grief can also trigger or worsen:

- Depression
- Anxiety disorders
- Post-traumatic stress symptoms
- Substance use

The Mental Health Connection

Unresolved grief can affect:

- **Sleep patterns**
- **Appetite and energy**
- **Work and school performance**
- **Relationships and social connection**
- **Physical health (weakened immunity, heart health)**

Coping Strategies for Grief

- **Allow Yourself to Grieve**
There's no timeline. It's okay to cry, remember, and feel.
- **Talk About It**
Share stories, memories, or emotions with trusted friends or professionals.
- **Create a Ritual or Tribute**
Honoring your loved one (lighting a candle, writing a letter) can be healing.
- **Avoid Isolation**
Stay connected to your community or support groups.
- **Practice Self-Compassion**
Be gentle with yourself. Grieving is hard work.
- **Seek Professional Help**
Therapy can support healthy grieving and address deeper distress.

When to Seek Help

If you or someone you know:

- Feels stuck in grief after many months
- Loses interest in life
- Talks about death or suicide
- Engages in risky or harmful behaviors

Please reach out. Professional help can make a difference.

FOR MENTAL HEALTH HELP OR SUPPORT, CONTACT:

MWI (24-HOUR LINE): 239-1111 | RED CROSS: 236-8253



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Ministry of Health