

# *Coping with* **Traumatic Loss**



When faced with unexpected and traumatic losses from accidents, unanticipated illnesses and/or deaths, we may experience many emotions and reactions which can be overwhelming.

Learn about what you may experience and how to care for yourself during such distress.

## Possible Reactions

Our responses and coping to the loss can differ for everyone. This can be due to various factors such as the nature of the relationships and the differing experience one has pertaining to the loss.



### Emotions (Feelings)

- Shock
- Sadness
- Anger
- Irritability
- Avoidance and denial
- Hopelessness
- Shame/Guilt
- Numbness
- Mood swing
- Fear and anxiety



### Physical (Symptoms)

- Fatigue
- Muscle stiffness
- Changes in appetite
- Headaches and body aches
- Sleep disturbances



### Cognition (Thoughts)

- Forgetfulness
- Hypervigilance
- Confusion
- Recurring flashbacks
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of sense of reality



### Behaviours (Symptoms)

- Persistent crying
- Substance use
- Social withdrawal or isolation

## Coping Strategies

- Recognise, accept and express your emotions
- Resume your daily routine
- Give yourself the time and space that you need
- Reach out to others
- Deep breathing exercises
- Apply positive coping strategies that have helped



### Reminders

1. It's okay to talk only when you are ready.
2. Everyone copes with losses differently.
3. There is no "right" or "wrong" way to cope, unless safety is compromised.
4. Have sufficient food and rest.



## When to Seek Help?

It is crucial to recognise your reactions and symptoms, along with identifying supportive individuals and coping strategies.

Seek professional assistance if you experience significant distress and impairment in your daily life for more than 6 to 12 months.

### Signs of Prolonged Grief Disorder

- Severe emotional pain or numbness
- Continued disbelief or avoidance about the death
- Intense longing for or preoccupation with the deceased
- Significant negative impact on daily functions and relationships
- Intense loneliness
- Feeling that a part of you has died, or that life is meaningless



Seek immediate assistance from 24-hour hotlines below and/or at your nearest hospital if you are experiencing thoughts of self-harm or having suicidal ideations.

### **IMH Mental Health Helpline**

Hotline: 6389 2222

### **Samaritans of Singapore (SOS)**

Individuals affected by crisis/suicide

Hotline: 1-767

CareText: 9151 1767 (WhatsApp)

## **Where to Seek Help?**

There are available mental health resources that are available that you can seek help from such as a social worker, counsellor, therapist or psychiatrist. There are also hotlines, online resources and support groups that can provide the necessary assistance and support.

### **Counselling and Care Centre**

Tel: 6536 6366

### **Hua Mei Counselling and Coaching**

For grieving seniors above 50 years old

Tel: 6593 9455

Counselling Tel: 9048 4987

### **O'Joy Limited**

Tel: 6749 0190

### **SAGE Counselling Centre**

For bereaved seniors above 50 and their family/caregivers

Tel: 6354 1191

Helpline: 1800 555 5555

### **Viriya Community Services**

For individuals and families

Tel: 6256 1311

### **Wicare Support Group**

For widows and their children

Tel: 6354 2475 / 9616 5091

## **Contact Us**

### **Department of Medical Social Work**

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