



Grief at Work

Help for Managers

Signs and Symptoms of a Grieving Employee

Over time, a bereaved employee may experience some of the following symptoms:

- Inability to concentrate
- Lack of motivation
- Exhaustion
- Impaired decision-making
- Confusion
- Memory gaps
- Anxiety
- Increased irritation, anger
- Crying
- Social withdrawal
- Apathy
- “Survivor syndrome”
- Decreasing productivity
- Seemingly inappropriate emotional responses
- Increased absenteeism
- Frequent illnesses
- Increased accident rate (on and off the job)

Helping a Grieving Employee

- Assisting grieving employees is a responsibility shared by grieving employees, coworkers and supervisors.
- Following a traumatic event, everyone has some type of emotional response.
- Each person will recover at their own rate.
- Tell your employees how you feel and that you're sorry for their loss.
- Avoid statements like “I know how you feel” or “Everything will be all right.” These statements make some people think their feelings are not understood.
- Be willing to say nothing.
- Offer bereavement counseling resources at the work site for coworkers and interested staff.

- Offer training workshops for staff on understanding grief and support for grieving employees.
- Access community support groups (often available through local hospices, funeral home, or through insurance companies).
- Remember that the grieving still happens long after the funeral is over.
- Be willing to ‘give a little’ when it seems appropriate (flexible hours, working from another site/location).
- Give fewer complex tasks, slower instructions.
- Try to be aware of difficult times (birthdays, holidays, anniversaries).
- Encourage people to ask for help from the Employee Assistance Program.

If you have questions, please call your clinician.

Danger Signs of a Grieving Employee

- Getting stuck in one stage or symptom (anger, depression)
- Personality changes
- Little or no grief
- Overreaction to other losses
- Lack of concern/attention to personal hygiene
- Withdrawal from relationships/isolation
- Sleep changes, appetite changes
- Hopelessness
- Psychosomatic illnesses
- Negative coping (alcohol/drug use, gambling, over-spending)
- Employee perceives lack of support in work setting
- Employee makes statements about not wanting to live

**Make a referral to Behavioral Healthcare Options.
Call toll-free 1-800-280-3782.**

It's important new employees are not made to feel like "replacements" for employees who have died. Reorganizing responsibilities and moving furniture can help spare the new employee and others the painful experience of having somebody new at "Sam's desk" doing "Sam's job."

Tiene derecho a recibir ayuda e información en su idioma sin costo. Para solicitar un intérprete, llame al número de teléfono gratuito para miembros que se encuentra en su tarjeta de identificación del plan o los documentos de su plan.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

1-800-280-3782