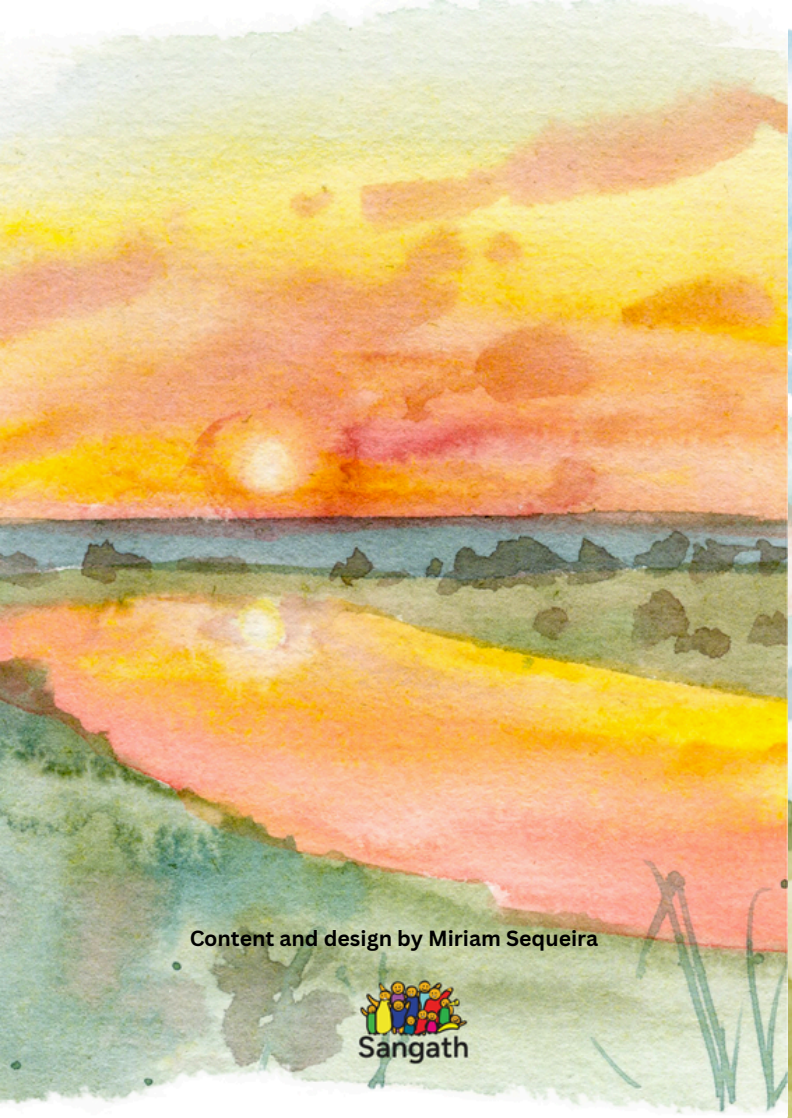


Content and design by Miriam Sequeira

Sangath

Life After Loss

A self-help booklet to cope with grief



Sangath

What is grief?

Grief is a natural response to losing someone important to you. It can affect your emotions, thoughts, body, behaviour, and relationships. Grief is highly personal - there is no "right" or "wrong" way to grieve, and no fixed timeline for recovery.

Grief is not an illness. It is a process of adapting to life after a significant loss. Although it can feel overwhelming at first, most people find that the intensity of grief gradually becomes easier to manage over time.

Each person grieves differently depending on their relationship with the person, their personality, values, beliefs, and life circumstances.

The important thing is to accept that it is okay to have these responses and that grieving is a process. We all have to face it at some point in our lives.



Common experiences in grief

Emotional responses

- Sadness
- Tearfulness
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Guilt
- Numbness
- Loneliness
- Fear or insecurity

Physical responses

- Difficulty sleeping
- Nightmares or dreams about the deceased
- Fatigue and low energy
- Changes in appetite
- Feeling anxious or shaky
- A sense of heaviness in your chest

Common repititive thoughts

- "I should have done more."
- "It's my fault."
- "Why did this happen?"
- "If only things had been different."
- "I can't imagine life without them."

Common behaviour changes

- Withdraw from others
- Avoid reminders of the person
- Avoid talking about them
- Find everyday tasks difficult
- Lose interest in usual activities

Changes in relationships

Grief can make people more sensitive, irritable, or withdrawn. Family members may grieve differently, which can sometimes lead to misunderstandings or conflict. Remember that people express grief in different ways.

What is expected and when should you seek professional help?

Although grief is painful, most responses are part of a natural grieving process.

It is common to:

- Feel intense sadness in the early weeks and months
- Experience waves of grief that come and go
- Feel preoccupied with the person who died
- Cry unexpectedly
- Have difficulty concentrating
- Feel emotionally numb at times
- Experience stronger emotions around anniversaries, birthdays, festivals, and significant dates

There is no deadline for grief.
Everyone adjusts at their own pace.

When does grief need additional support?

Sometimes grief becomes "stuck" and starts to interfere significantly with daily life. This is called complicated or prolonged grief.

Consider seeking professional help if:

- Intense grief remains overwhelming for many months without improvement
- You are unable to manage daily responsibilities
- You cannot return to work, study, or other regular activities
- You feel emotionally numb and unable to connect with your feelings
- Grief is causing serious problems in your relationships
- You are relying heavily on alcohol or drugs to cope
- You feel hopeless, despairing, or suicidal

Grief can be particularly difficult when:

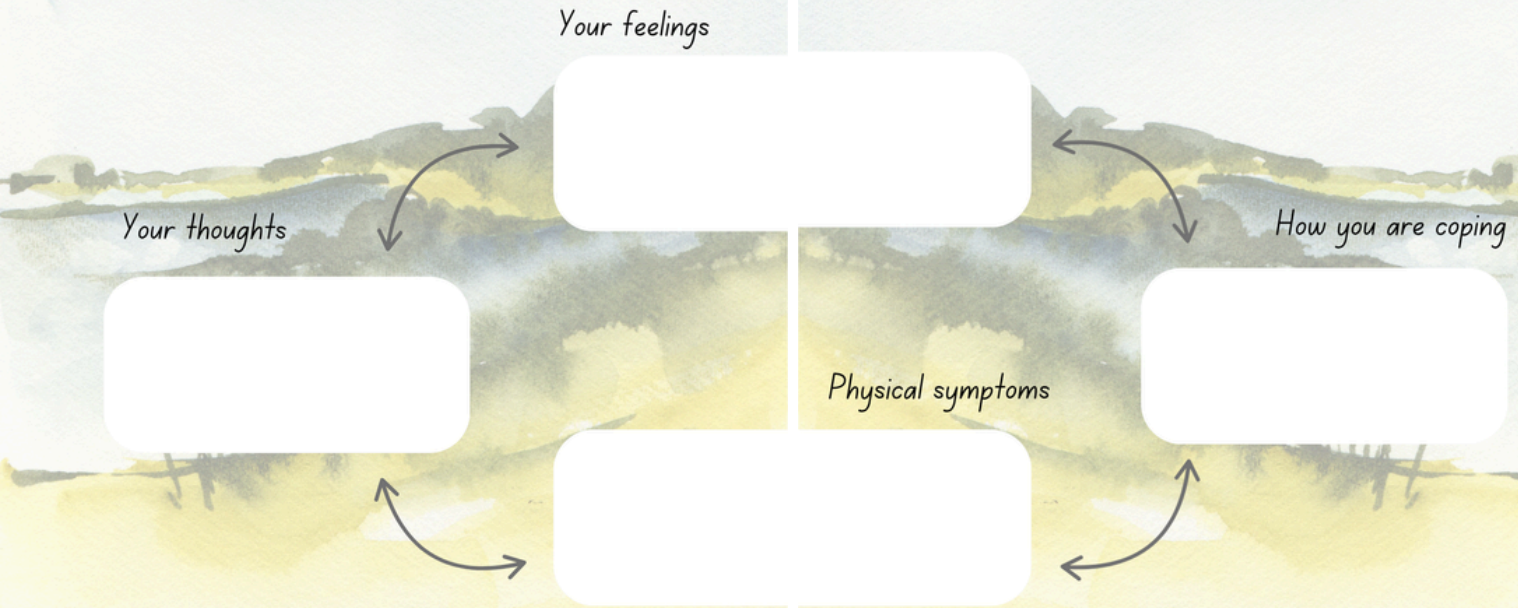
- The death was sudden or unexpected
- The death was traumatic
- The death was due to suicide
- You were unable to say goodbye
- You had a complicated relationship with the person who died
- Previous unresolved losses are resurfacing

Seeking support is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Your feelings of grief worksheet

The things you think and feel when dealing with grief, and the methods you use to try to feel better, can sometimes make it harder to move forward. Use the table below to write about how you've been feeling so far, and how you have been dealing with your grief. Filling this in helps you see how your emotions, thoughts, physical symptoms and coping methods are all linked, and can all affect each other.

Describe your situation. You could write about who you lost, and how long ago it happened.



Helpful Ways of Coping with Grief

1. Allow yourself to grieve

Give yourself the freedom to experience your feelings. Cry if you need to. There is no need to rush the process or judge yourself for how you are grieving.

2. Stay connected

Reach out to trusted family members, friends, or community members. Let people know what you need, whether it is practical help, company, or simply someone to listen. You are not burdening them by doing so.

3. Keep a gentle routine

Having some structure can help when life feels chaotic. Try to include:

- Daily tasks
- Meals
- Rest
- Social contact
- Activities you usually enjoy

4. Stay active and engaged

When you feel ready:

- Go for walks
- Spend time outdoors
- Continue hobbies
- Try new activities
- Stay socially connected

Small steps can improve mood and create a sense of purpose.

5. Express your feelings

Many people find it helpful to:

- Journal
- Write letters
- Create artwork
- Record voice notes
- Talk with trusted people

Expressing grief often helps people process it more effectively.

6. Remember your loved one

Healing does not mean forgetting.

Helpful ways to maintain a connection include:

- Sharing stories and memories
- Looking at photographs
- Creating memory books
- Visiting meaningful places
- Honouring them on special dates
- Donating to a scholarship or other cause in their name

7. Lean on your beliefs and community

Faith, spirituality, cultural rituals, and support groups can provide comfort, meaning, and connection during grief.

8. Avoid unhealthy coping strategies

Alcohol and drugs may temporarily numb painful emotions but often make grief harder to manage in the long term.

"Its the unpredictable things that take me by surprise, like a song on the radio or the smell of a perfume. I get such strong feelings in that moment."

Where can you find support?

1. Toll-free helpline across India
Tele-MANAS - 14416 or 1-800 891 4416

2. Self-Help and Educational Resources

What's Your Grief - whatsyourgrief.com
One of the most widely respected grief education websites. Offers articles, worksheets, podcasts, and practical coping strategies.

Centre for Prolonged Grief - prolongedgrief.columbia.edu
Evidence-based information about grief, prolonged grief, and treatment options.

Marie Curie Bereavement Support - www.mariecurie.org.uk
Free online articles, videos, and practical guidance for coping with bereavement.

The reality is that you will grieve forever. You will not 'get over' the loss. You will learn to live with it. You will heal and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. You will be whole again, but you will never be the same. Nor should you be the same nor would you want to.

Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

You don't have to grieve alone



3. Peer support groups

Sangath, Goa, India - www.sangath.in
This support group is run by Miriam Sequeira, a counsellor with more than a decade of experience in counselling and lived experience of grief and loss.
Call her to find out more - +91 -87-887-66-334

SoulUp Grief Support Groups - www.soulup.in
SoulUp runs therapist-led online grief support groups for adults grieving the death of a loved one. Groups are small, confidential, and conducted online, allowing participants to connect with others who have experienced similar losses.