

# Living with grief

## Grief support options

We're happy to walk alongside you with your grief, talk through your feelings and support you during this time.

### Counselling

Experienced counsellors are available to speak with you over the phone and in some locations face to face counselling is available.

### Referrals

Guidance and referrals for you to access other appropriate grief and health services in your local area.

### Eligibility

These services are available to anyone affected by blood cancer.

### Cost

There is no cost for this support.

## How to access grief support

Contact us on 1800 620 420

You can also join our private Grief and Bereavement Community Facebook group via our website: [Grief support services](#)

Email us at [referral@leukaemia.org.au](mailto:referral@leukaemia.org.au)

Grief is a natural, powerful and human response to the loss of someone close to us. We all experience grief differently.

## Common experiences with grief

The death of a loved one is one of the most challenging losses we face in life. The feelings created by the loss can be intense, overwhelming and often change dramatically, making the whole process feel chaotic and out of control.

Over time, the impact of grief can fluctuate in intensity. Our services during this time can help you make meaning of these intense emotions.

### The reality of grief

Grief allows us to experience the pain of loss and make the gradual readjustment to life without the person who has died. It is not an illness to be cured or treated but part of the human condition. Grief can be overwhelming, but as you heal the intensity and frequency of these feelings gradually decreases. With time and support you'll adjust to your new reality and feel you can integrate the loss into your new normal.

### Remembrance events

The Leukaemia Foundation hosts Light the Night, a national remembrance and celebration event, every year. It's a beautiful lantern walk that takes place in the evening, where Australians come together to pay tribute to those facing their own blood cancer journey and remember loved ones lost, creating a glowing sea of support.

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## What you might be experiencing

There is a broad range of physical, emotional and spiritual changes you may experience.

### Physical

- Overwhelming tiredness
- Exhaustion and fatigue - like 'walking in syrup'
- Nausea and no appetite
- Wanting to sleep a lot but being unable to
- Having a lot of energy and wanting to be very busy
- Restlessness and agitation
- Changes in sexual feelings

### Spiritual

- Questioning the meaning of it all or searching for answers
- Feeling pointless and asking questions like 'why bother?'
- Feeling spiritually bereft or rejecting long held beliefs
- Alternatively, gaining comfort from religious beliefs
- Searching for peace

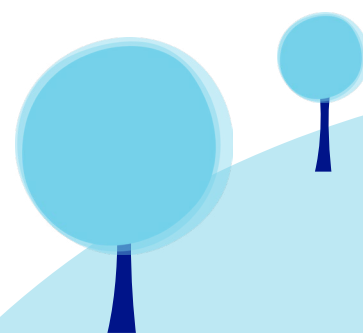
### Emotional

- sadness/deep sorrow
- disbelief/numbness
- overwhelmed peace/gratitude
- relief/renewal irritability/anger/rage
- despair/desperation
- loneliness/longing or pining
- love and great warmth for the person who has died
- guilt
- fear



## What you might be experiencing

- Inability to stop thoughts running through your mind
- Replaying events in your mind, wondering if you could have done more
- Going over 'what ifs'
- Thinking nothing makes sense
- Confusion, foggy thinking and being unable to concentrate
- Worrying you are out of control
- Thinking this is never going to end
- Concern you won't stop crying, screaming or raging
- Worrying that others think you should be better by now
- Thinking you can only manage one day or one hour at a time



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## Tips on helping yourself

- Feel whatever you feel, and be kind to yourself
- Get as much rest as you need
- Try to exercise
- Eat nutritious food when you can
- Ask for and accept help
- Spend time with people who you find helpful
- If you have children, enlist family and friends for help as it may just be too much for you to support grieving children while you too are grieving
- Make a memory box, scrapbook or 'things that made us laugh list'
- Continue the connection with the person who has died
- Talk to them, look at photos, visit the place where they are buried or where their ashes were scattered
- Don't feel you must grieve all the time – try some things you enjoy as well, if you feel up to it
- It's okay to smile and feel happy – your loved one would want that for you and it doesn't mean you're forgetting them.
- Get to know your own rhythm for grieving, staying with the sadness and making sense of it, then retreating from it and distracting yourself
- Get family or friends to help when your emotional or physical energy is low
- Read books about grief or visit helpful websites

Acknowledgements: Adapted from 'Common Experiences of Grief' by Clare Holland, Specialist Palliative Care Services, ACT.

We can help  
**you**  
understand  
your grief

The Leukaemia Foundation provides support and services to people with blood cancer, their families and carers. From emotional, health and wellbeing support, to practical support, transport and accommodation.

Visit [leukaemia.org.au](http://leukaemia.org.au)  
or call 1800 620 420 to speak  
with our Grief Support Team.

