

**Be a good listener**

Grieving people need to talk about their loss, acknowledge that they have been through a difficult experience. You can't fix their grief but you can be there, hear their story, and share their journey.

**Be a shoulder to cry on**

Allow them to cry with you, crying helps the release of emotions and this helps with healing.

**Be in touch with them**

Drop in, call on the telephone and say "I was thinking of you today" write a letter, send an email, remember special days like Christmas, birthdays and anniversaries.

When someone has experienced a loss, there will be big and small adjustments to be made in their lives. These could bring uncertainty, frustration, fear, sadness and change as each new day comes along. Grief is about adapting to change in life, thoughts, hopes, beliefs and the future.

**Be a friend**

Often being there is all that is needed to support someone who is grieving.

(Adapted from the writings of Doris Zagdanski)

**For more information  
or to contact a  
NALAG Centre or Branch  
near you please contact**

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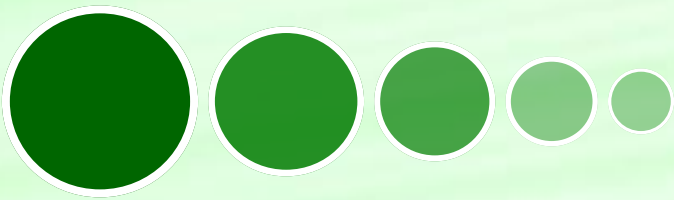
**Telephone Grief Support Line  
02 9489 6644**

(call costs will apply)

## Death in the Workplace

Helpful hints for management  
following a death in the  
workplace





## Death in the Workplace

People go to work expecting "business as usual" and to go home at the end of the day to their families. The last thing they expect is for a co-worker to die in the workplace, from natural causes, or as a result of a tragic event.

When a death does occur in the workplace, worksites are often thrown into chaos. If the death occurred as a result of an industrial incident, fire, murder, or similar tragic incident, workers have to deal with a range of issues in addition to shock and the loss of a work mate. These issues generally relate to concerns about how and why the situation occurred and often result in feelings of anger, guilt, fears for personal safety and a need for someone or something to blame.

## Helpful hints for Management

Regardless of the cause of death, it is helpful if management:

- send a clear, simple message of support to staff to help them recover from the event
- have an "open door" to staff

- provide a qualified counselling service.
- a fatal accident should consult with any worker who witnessed the fatal incident and make arrangement for critical incident debriefing or counselling services.
- Involve a counselling professional who can also act as a point of advice and support for them.
- make contact with the employees family without delay and be available to answer any questions, or to give help to the family, in the early days after the death. The family may wish to visit the site of the death and meet co-workers who helped their loved ones.

## Helping Staff

Staff may also be helped to deal with their grief by:

- organising activities in remembrance of their dead colleague
- having time off to attend the funeral
- holding a special ceremony at the workplace
- taking up a collection for the family
- planting a tree on-site
- establishing some other memorial
- putting a tribute in the newspaper.

For other workers, simply getting on with standard routines, and avoiding any special activities related to the death, may be the best way of putting the event behind them. We each deal with our grief in our ways. There is no right or wrong way.

## Workcover and Workers Compensation

Management should:-

- be helpful and assist in responding effectively to any investigations by workplace insurance agents and the Coroner.
- All deaths in the workplace will be investigated, and it may be important for all parties to be prepared for this.
- consult the families affected by the death and the claims agent responsible for managing the death claim.

Adapted from Grief Link resources website:  
[www.grieflink.asn.au](http://www.grieflink.asn.au)

