

Caring Through Loss – Supporting Grief in the Workplace

Learning outcomes

After this huddle, staff should be able to:

- Recognize the range of emotions that can be associated with grief and loss.
- Recognize that experiencing and expressing grief is a natural part of caregiving.
- Discuss healthy ways to acknowledge and express grief.

Instructions

Share a reflection with staff that providing end-of-life care is one of the most important and compassionate parts of the work they do in long-term care. It can also lead to experiences of grief for those providing this care. Grief can also arise when one of our residents goes to a different care home or when we watch their health decline. Encourage your staff to also reflect on the value of their work and the positive impact they have on the people they care for.

Read the scenario out loud and use the guiding questions and key discussion points to have a conversation about employees' experience with grief and loss in the workplace.



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Scenario

Maria, a caregiver, had been looking after Mr. Jensen, a long-time resident, for over three years. They shared many heartfelt conversations about his family, his love for gardening, and his favourite childhood memories. Maria often joked that Mr. Jensen reminded her of her grandfather. When Mr. Jensen passed away, Maria was deeply affected.

A few days later, while assisting another resident, Maria found herself tearing up unexpectedly. She tried to hide her emotions, fearing it might appear unprofessional to her colleagues or upsetting to the residents. Later, she confided in a coworker, saying, "I feel like I shouldn't let this affect me, but I can't help it."

Guiding questions

- What emotions might Maria feel while experiencing this grief?
- What could Maria's coworkers or supervisor do to support her?
- How can the team foster an environment where expressing grief is accepted and seen as healthy?

Notes to the huddle leader

- Review SafeCare BC's grief webpage to prepare.
- Grief can be a difficult and sensitive subject, so offer participants the space to listen quietly.
- Grief is the emotional, psychological, and physical reaction to death or loss.
- Grief can cause a range of emotions, including anger, sadness, depression, loneliness, hopelessness, and numbness.
- Grief is different for different people and is sometimes not even visible. This may be because of their own experiences, personality, coping style, and/or relationship they had with a resident.
- Acknowledging and recognizing grief is an important part of supporting the health and wellbeing of workers. Employees should not be expected to repress their grief.



Safety Huddle: Caring Through Loss – Supporting Grief in the Workplace

Huddle leader: _____

Date: _____

Attendance:

Name

Initial

[illegible]

Additional resources

SafeCare BC -

Grief Safety Topic Page



SafeCare BC