

Caring through loss - silent 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 them 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.

After this huddle

Staff should be able to:

- Discuss how everyone processes grief in a different way.
- Recognize how coworkers can be a source of support during times of grief.
- Discuss how to foster a workplace culture where being open about grief is supported.



Guiding questions

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- Recognize how coworkers can be a source of support during times of grief.
- Discuss how to foster a workplace culture where being open about grief is supported.

Scenario

James, a quieter member of the care team, has always been professional but reserved. After Mrs. Patel, a resident he cared for, passed away, his coworkers noticed subtle changes. He seemed less engaged during shift meetings, avoided group lunch breaks, and would often sit alone.

One of his coworkers, Sarah, mentioned, "I'm not sure James even liked Mrs. Patel that much. They never seemed that close." Others in the team agreed, brushing off his behavior. However, James and Mrs. Patel shared a unique bond through their love of crossword puzzles, which they completed together every evening. James hadn't shared this connection with anyone else, and now that she was gone, he didn't know how to talk about it.

Notes to the huddle leader

- Review the grief resource (linked below) 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, hopefulness, and numbness.
- Grief looks 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 very important to supporting the health and wellbeing of workers. Employees should not be expected to repress their grief.



