



# Guide to Grief and Loss

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This package was created by the Healthy U program at the University of Manitoba. Healthy U is a UM student group made up of a team of friendly volunteers who are trained student health educators.

We provide students with validated health information through our health packages and outreach events, online resources, and one-on-one support. Health topics that we provide resources on include mental health, sexual health, physical health, substance use, social and cultural wellness, and finding a balance.

Please reach out to us if you have any questions at:  
[healthyu@umanitoba.ca](mailto:healthyu@umanitoba.ca)



# What is grief and why does it happen?

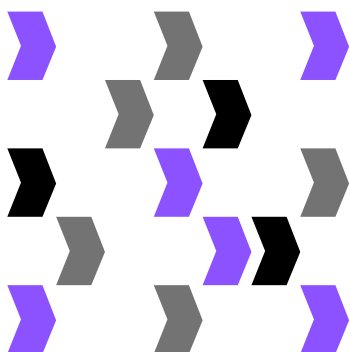
Grief is your body's way of **responding to loss**. You can experience grief through a variety of different situations, like but not limited to:

- Job loss
- Breakups with a partner
- The death of a loved one
- Loss of a friend
- Loss of financial security
- Graduation
- Death of a pet

## What does it feel like?

Keep in mind that understanding your journey through grief can be a difficult one and you may find yourself reacting in different ways.

- Feeling sad, angry, anxious, in shock, in denial or regretful.
- Changes in sleep and eating patterns, fatigue or increase minor illnesses such as headaches, stomach aches or sore back.
- Forgetfulness, poor concentration, or disorientation.
- Needing more time off work.
- If someone has died, spending your time yearning for the person who has died or thinking about their death.



It's okay to feel like you're not reacting to loss in a "normal" way too. Remember that there is no right or wrong way to react to loss and what is considered "normal" can change daily.

# How can I cope with the loss I'm experiencing?

When you experience a loss, it's common to feel like you want to avoid it because the feelings that come with grief are hard to tackle.

In light of this, avoiding your grief and trying to "get over it fast" can do more harm than good.



Your grief is unique to you and can take different amounts of time because we all grieve in our own way. Here are some things you can try to help you along the way...

- **Accept the reality of the loss.** Some may try to protect themselves by denying the loss, but accepting it can make the process easier for you.
- **Take on the task of acknowledging personal growth.** When experiencing loss, it's possible to discover new things about yourself.
- **Set reasonable expectations.** Setting boundaries for yourself is important because you'll need to recognize the emotional energy that it takes to grieve. Asking others for help, making realistic plans for yourself or setting priorities are some ways you can take care of yourself.

# Someone close to me just died, how can I memorialize them?

Making the time to remember the person who died is healthy and promotes positive grieving. It can help you recognize the importance that person had on your life (and still does), recognize the difficult times and can help build your life around the loss.



You can try looking over old **photo albums or collections** to celebrate the memories, start your own **scrap book** dedicated to the person who died, create a **memory box** filled with items that remind you of the person who died, or you could **arrange a ceremony** that fits your culture or religion.

# Someone I know is grieving, how can I help?

If you have a friend or loved one experiencing a loss, it can be difficult to figure out what to say or how to help them. The following may help you have that difficult and emotional conversation...

- **Ask Questions.** You can connect with someone easier by showing curiosity and concern for their wellbeing. Asking things like, "how are things going for you?". or "how can I help you through this?" are some examples.
- **Respect their experience.** If you have experienced a loss before and recognized that you coped a different way than them, make sure you keep in mind that they're doing what they think is best for them, even if it wasn't something you would do to cope.
- **Stay present in the moment.** Make eye contact and show them that you're listening and that you care.
- **Get consent before you offer advice or strategies for coping.** Sometimes, this can overstep boundaries. Sometimes all your friend/family member needs is a listening ear.



# Creating a Memory Box

Making a memory box can allow you to keep special items that remind you of the person who died. You can keep it to yourself in a safe place, or share it with your friends and family.

- First, **find a box that interests you**. It can be any size, shape or colour.
- Second, **decorate your box**. You can make it your own or follow a theme that reminds you of your loved one. Covering the box with construction paper of your choice, stickers or even photos of the person who died can make it unique to you.
- Lastly, **find items to place in your box**. Photos, jewelry, or items that remind you of the person who died are a few examples.









# UM Resources

## Grief and Loss

### [Student Counselling Centre \(SCC\)](#)

The SCC provides students with supports for their mental wellness. The offer offers individual counselling, workshops, and groups.

474 UMSU University Centre

204 474-8592

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/student-health-and-wellness/student-counselling-centre-scc>

### [Health and Wellness](#)

The Health and Wellness Educator is a Registered Psychiatric Nurse and available to talk about health and wellness topics.

469 UMSU University Centre (within the SCC)

204-295-9032

[healthandwellness@umanitoba.ca](mailto:healthandwellness@umanitoba.ca)

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/health-wellness>

### [Console](#)

Console is a mental health service available to UM students who have insurance through the university. It offers 24-hour crisis support, daily journal, wellness assessment quizzes, mental health literacy training, and self-guided therapy. Console also connects students with mental health professional support VIA telephone.

[https://studentcare.ca/rte/en/IHaveAPlan\\_UniversityofManitoba\\_Console\\_Console](https://studentcare.ca/rte/en/IHaveAPlan_UniversityofManitoba_Console_Console)

### [Indigenous Student Centre \(ISC\)](#)

The Indigenous Student Centre welcomes and supports Indigenous students and offers programming for students at any level of study, including Indigenous leadership development. They also provide opportunities for students, staff and the wider community to learn about First Nations, Inuit and Métis culture.

Migizii Agamik - Bald Eagle Lodge

[isc@umanitoba.ca](mailto:isc@umanitoba.ca)

204-474-8850

<https://umanitoba.ca/indigenous/student-experience>

### [Healthy U](#)

Healthy U provides students with health and wellness resources.

[healthyuofm@umanitoba.ca](mailto:healthyuofm@umanitoba.ca)

<https://www.healthyuofm.com/>

### [Sexual Violence Resource Centre \(SVRC\)](#)

Provides support, resources, information and referral services for any student, faculty or staff member who has been affected by sexual violence

537 UMSU University Centre

[svrc@umanitoba.ca](mailto:svrc@umanitoba.ca)

204-474-6562

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/sexual-violence-support-and-education>

# UM Resources

## Grief and Loss

### Spirituality Services

One-on-one emotional and spiritual support. Recognize, affirm and work with your existing values and beliefs.

528 UMSU University Centre

spiritualcare@umanitoba.ca

204-298-2467

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/spiritual-services>

### Student Support Case Management

Provides free resource information, practical supports and safety planning in a confidential manner. Assistance with academic needs such as authorized withdrawals, deferred assignments/exams.

520 UMSU University Centre

204-474-7423

stadv@umanitoba.ca

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/academic-supports/student-advocacy/case-management>

### Student Accessibility Services (SAS)

SAS provides supports for students with disabilities and to foster success for your academic future.

520 UMSU University Centre

204-474-7423 (Fort Garry campus) 204-

272-3190 (Bannatyne campus)

student\_accessibility@umanitoba.ca

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/accessibility>

### Student Advocacy

Confidential support to help you understand your rights as a student including assistance with making academic requests (e.g., deferrals or withdrawals), filing a complaint, or accessing resources.

520 UMSU University Centre

204-474-7423

stadv@umanitoba.ca

<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/academic-supports/student-advocacy>

# Resources

## Grief and Loss

### Winnipeg and Manitoba

#### [Cancer Care](#)

Cancer Care provides free counselling, support groups, and support to those who have experienced a loss of a loved one to cancer.

General Line:1-800-813-4673

[https://www.cancercare.org/tagged/grief\\_and\\_loss](https://www.cancercare.org/tagged/grief_and_loss)

#### [Psychology Today](#)

Select a provider with experience and expertise in coping and navigating through grief and loss. To note, this is not a free service but you may be able to utilize your private insurance to cover costs - please contact your insurance provider for specifics.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/ca/therapists/mb/winnipeg?category=grief>

### Online

#### [Living My Culture \(Created by Canadian Virtual Hospice\)](#)

Provides education and insight on various cultures and their views and practices on the topics of death, dying, grief and bereavement.

[www.livingmyculture.ca](http://www.livingmyculture.ca)

#### [My Grief \(Created by Canadian Virtual Hospice\)](#)

Provides education and self-help e-books that people who are grieving may use during their journey of bereavement. This can be done at your own pace in the comfort of your own private space or home.

[www.mygrief.ca](http://www.mygrief.ca)

#### [CMHA: Grieving](#)

Provides education and self-help information on topics such as understanding grief, how to support yourself or a loved one and 1:1 support on navigating further resources.

<https://cmha.ca/brochure/grieving/>