

The  
**SOLUTION source**  
Thunder Bay Counselling Newsletter  
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*For You & Your Family*

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# LIFE'S CHANGES

**EXPECTED OR SUDDEN CHANGES AND LOSS CAN GREATLY AFFECT US.**

The feeling of grief can be connected to any changes or losses in life. It can hit hard and fast or develop over time. Each experience of grief is different and each person experiences grief differently. Although it's something we all feel, it doesn't make it easy. Taking time to learn what helps you grieve and deal with change is important to begin to heal.

## IN THIS ISSUE:

Common Causes of Grief .....	2
How do You Know You are Grieving? .....	3
Grief Has no Timeline .....	3
How to Help Someone Who is Grieving .....	4

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Counselling Centre  
of East Algoma



Centre de counseling  
d'Algoma Est



## COMMON CAUSES OF GRIEF



Grief is the conflicting feelings caused by the end of or change in a familiar pattern of behavior.

– John W. James and Russell Friedman, *The Grief Recovery Method*.



The feelings and process of grief can happen with any type of change or loss in someone's life. Grief can be short or last years. No matter the change or loss, grief can make your world seem upside down or foreign, like everything is different. This is why it can be difficult to navigate feelings of grief at first as it is something new your body and brain need time to understand.

Common causes of grief could be:

- Loss of life
- Divorce or ending of a relationship
- Loss of a job or financial stability
- Retirement
- Loss of health
- Loss of a friendship
- Loss of safety or trust after a trauma
- Loss of belongings – home, cars or sentimental items

Even some things that may seem like subtle changes to some can cause feelings of grief. This can include situations like moving, graduations, or changing of jobs. Your reactions to loss and change are personal to you. What you hold to be important and significant is what will impact your reactions and feelings. ■

# HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU ARE GRIEVING?

The experience of grief is different for everyone. Symptoms can be physical, mental, or a combination of both. There is no proper way to feel while grieving, it is all personal and individual to you, but that doesn't mean you are alone.

After a loss or change it can be difficult to fully realize how grief is impacting your life. These feelings can be moments of sorrow, anger, anxiety or can be completely debilitating and numbing. The symptoms can be immediate or come with time. Even the most flexible and adaptable of us get affected by change and loss - it's human.

## Grief can present as:

- Exhaustion or numbness
- Aches and pains, feeling sick
- Sensitivity to noise or light
- Irritability, anger or uncontrollable mood swings
- Depression or loneliness
- Anxiety
- Restlessness or hyperactivity
- Lack of concentration
- Lack of sleep or rest
- Loss of appetite, including nausea or indigestion

Grief is different for everyone and no situation is the same. Take time to check in with yourself or a loved one to ensure needs are met as you work through this difficult time. It's important to pay attention to these symptoms and consult with a professional, such as a doctor, nurse or mental health professional if you are concerned. ■



## GRIEF HAS NO TIMELINE

Grief is unignorable. Although it is common to think of the first stage of grief as the “denial period” it is different for everyone. Some may be able to acknowledge their grief with the loss or change and others may struggle, even in similar situations. Not everyone goes through stages or follows the same path. The process of healing requires time, self-care, support and is unique to everyone. There is no time too soon or too late to begin to heal from a loss.

Time can heal some wounds but support can also help. If you or someone you know is struggling with grief, getting additional support can help. Support groups or speaking with a counsellor can help give a listening ear, build connections with understanding others, and provide tools from an outside perspective to help in this overwhelming time. Getting support doesn't have to be when you are at the end of your rope or in crisis. There is no magic wand but there are caring people ready to listen.

## Not sure how professional or peer support can help you?

- Receive an additional perspective, someone who may be able to help you see solutions
- Get support to understand feelings of anger, anxiety, or sadness
- Help to plan life after loss, what does that look like to you
- Have someone to listen - sometimes all we need to do is talk.
- Receive tools to apply and practice in your life ■



## HOW TO HELP SOMEONE WHO IS GRIEVING

As grief is unique, so are the needs of the griever. Understand that this is a very personal experience for them, not one situation is the same. Reaching out can make all the difference. Changes and loss can be an isolating experience. Giving your support to this person lets them know they are not alone and someone is there to help them through this time. This does not mean giving words of wisdom or advice, telling them how to get over the loss, or sharing your experiences. Support can look like just being a listening ear, helping to lighten their load (possibly at work or home), give them space to understand their feelings and situation.

“ Breathe and remember that you’ve been in this place before. You’ve been this uncomfortable and anxious and scared, and you’ve survived. Breathe and know that you can survive this too. These feelings can’t break you. They’re painful and debilitating, but you can sit with them and eventually, they will pass. Maybe not immediately, but sometime soon, they are going to fade and when they do, you’ll look back at this moment and laugh for having doubted your resilience. I know it feels unbearable right now, but keep breathing, again and again. This will pass. I promise it will pass. ”

– Daniell Koepke

In complicated and difficult times, it can be difficult to see past the pain. In times like these people may contemplate suicide to end this pain. We know that most people who die by suicide don’t want to die but want the pain to end. If you or someone you know has thoughts of suicide please reach out. Ensure safety and connect with professional support. ■

**Crisis Response is available 24/7 by calling (807) 346-8282 or 1-888-269-3100 or call 911.  
CHANGE IS POSSIBLE.**

### **December 6th 2019 marks 30 years since Canada experienced a gender based school shooting at Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal.**

To honour these women, and all since who have fallen to femicide, The Counselling Centre of East Algoma will be hosting a memorial at the Elliot Lake City Hall. Please Join us in this ceremony, and listen and share ways our community is **combating Gender Based Violence**. Starts at 7pm. Food and Drink provided.

Find out more on our Facebook page, or by emailing Malin at [mjohnson@ccea.life](mailto:mjohnson@ccea.life)



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