

## Coping With Loss and Death

Coping with loss and death are two of the most painful and unfair challenges one might ever face....the first few days are often the most difficult and the grief and questions about the death may last for a long time, even years. The pain produced by sudden, accidental deaths or violent, traumatic deaths is not something that you can just handle or get over....don't feel as though you are weak if you continue to suffer for a long time from despair.

Circumstances of sudden deaths – accidental or violent can really take family members and friends by surprise and be very traumatic....Individuals may feel exhausted to the point of collapse...the emotional toll can be crippling. There can be such a sense of helplessness It is important to have a strong support system from which to draw strength.

Some of the feelings and issues following the devastating news of any death are:

**Shock and confusion.** We can feel very disconnected from feelings and other people, like living in a dream. “Everything is so unreal”. “This can't really be happening”.

**Disbelief.** We can feel numb to the news and believe that these deaths couldn't have actually happened....that person must still be present.

**Pain and sadness.** Usual grief reactions that can be extremely painful and excruciatingly sad.

**Absent Grief.** The unexpected nature of the death can leave us acting like the death hasn't happened or the significance hasn't yet really registered.

**Strong sense of helplessness that may be expressed as anger, agitation or immobilization.**

**Distress about missed opportunities, regrets about things not done or said to the person who died.**

**A search for answers about the reasons for the death, the accident, the murder/the suicide, ??? about the meaning of life, questions about 'why' this person had to die....”how could God let this happen?**

### Coping Tips:

- **Talk, talk, talk.... to family and friends; share your thoughts and feelings with others who are experiencing this similar loss; don't deny feelings even unpleasant ones.**
- **Focus on self-care...remember to eat, sleep and exercise...be yourself, take one day at a time.**
- **Take support. Ask for support. Stay in contact with others.**
- **Talk about and remember the one who died...create a ritual. Plant a tree, give a donation to an organization in that person's name.**
- **Remain involved in activities; carry on with routines.**
- **Don't hesitate to reach out to a professional. This is not a sign of weakness but a sign of courage.**
- **Go on line and sign up for [gonetosoon.org](http://gonetosoon.org).**

**Here are some suggestions for helpful supports and services:**

- Kids Help Phone  
1-800-668-6868  
[www.kidshelpphone.ca](http://www.kidshelpphone.ca)  
The Kids Help Phone is a free, anonymous, confidential phone and web counseling and referral service for young people of all ages.
- Youth Support Line  
519-821-5469  
Toll free 1-888-821-3760  
The Youth Support Line provides confidential, supportive listening, resources and information for young people available 24/7.
- Dufferin Child and Family Services, Children's Mental Health  
519-941-1530  
The Crisis Service offers phone support and 1:1 counseling for children/youth to the age of 18 years who are in urgent need of emotional support.  
The Talk-In Clinic is open every Tuesday from 1:00 pm to 8:00 pm for counseling and support.
- Community Torchlight Distress Line  
519-821-3760  
Toll free 1-888-821-3760  
The Distress Line is a 24/7 telephone listening service supporting people who are lonely, confused and /or distressed about their circumstances
- Crisis Line  
519-821-0140  
Toll free 1-877-822-0140  
The Crisis Line is a 24/7 hotline for people experiencing a mental health or suicide crisis. They also support family/friends or professionals/support workers.