

# BEREAVEMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

## MANAGERS GUIDE

Staff working in a healthcare environment may be faced with the death of someone they know, either a patient, colleague, or loved one. Managers are an important source of support for their team members as they encounter distress during difficult times.

### Understanding Grief

There is no typical response to loss. When someone is bereaved they experience a process of grief which can include many painful feelings associated with loss, including anger, deep sadness, fear and regret. Someone may feel all, none or some combination of these emotions.

Grief can also cause people to act differently to how they usually would, as they attempt to adjust to what has happened. Changes may include restlessness, tiredness, forgetfulness, mood swings, loss of concentration and loss of confidence.

### What you can do to support someone grieving in the workplace

-  **Meet with and listen to them** – understand their individual needs at this time. Ensure they feel heard and supported.
-  **Talk about any changes they have noticed within themselves** or feelings they have and acknowledge that this is understandable and normal.
-  **Check in with them regularly** as the process of grief changes over time and their needs may vary.
-  **Give them permission to look after themselves** and take time out when they need to.
-  **Work may be a helpful coping mechanism for them** – a sense of routine may be what they need – don't assume they need space and time away from the workplace.
-  **Remember that they may not be able to work to their usual capacity** – consider reducing their workload to a level that feels manageable and appropriate.
-  **Remain compassionate**, recognise you cannot stop the pain, but you can help reduce it a little.
-  **Ensure they are looking after their physical health** as they may be struggling with lack of sleep due to the feelings they are experiencing.
-  **Give them the self-care advice available on the main trust website and BOB** which also details further sources of support for them.

### Further support

If you, as a manager, are struggling and require further support please seek support:

Occupational Health [ndht.occupationalhealth@nhs.net](mailto:ndht.occupationalhealth@nhs.net)

Employee Assistance Provision (EAP) available 24/7 for staff (03303 800658) calls charged at local rate

CRUSE Bereavement Care (0844 477 9400)

<https://people.nhs.uk/guides/bereavement-support-during-covid-19/>