

Grief After Death—Impact on the Workplace
Bereaved Families of Ontario
Ottawa-Carleton

When someone close to us dies, we're thrown virtually off balance. Our emotions, our bodies, our spirits—every aspect of our lives is affected.

Death- A Workplace Issue

Experiencing grief at work is not uncommon. In fact, difficulty concentrating, depression, absenteeism and physical symptoms are only a few of the reactions that can directly affect your employee's performance.

Fact

- Approximately more than 9000 employees in Nova Scotia will be affected by a death this year.
- Death of an employee or an employee's loved one can have wide-spread effects on the performance of co-workers too—and if left unchecked—can impact the company's bottom line!

What You Can Do to Meet Your Employee's Needs

Whether it's you, the manager, a supervisor or a fellow employee—death can affect everyone! Therefore, how we deal with that death will determine how great an impact it has on both the company and the individual.

- Recognize that grief is normal and necessary
- Educate and sensitize yourself and employees to understand the grief process
- Adjust expectation and work with employees to determine work assignments
- Listen—do not offer advice
- Keep relevant material on hand
- Avoid clichés like “I understand what you're going through” you can't
- Assist the bereaved with financial matters such as company death benefits and insurance
- Re-evaluate existing policies around compassionate leave to reflect flexibility

How We Can Help You Meet Your Needs

Lack of experience or personal discomfort with death, may leave many of us at best, ineffective in relating to the bereaved. At worst, we may be detrimental to their healing process.

Bereaved Families of Ontario-Ottawa-Carleton will work together with you and your employees to help you increase comfort levels with death, dying and bereavement.

We Offer:

- Workshops on bereavement and support for the co-worker
- Training and support for managers
- Bereavement support for those recovering from a significant loss

- Lunchtime seminars for interested employees on death as part of life and coping with grief
- Sudden death and suicide debriefing for co-workers

“A Co-Worker Just Died and I Feel So Bad”

One of the most difficult events that we all must face is the death of someone who is part of our daily lives.

Normal symptoms you may experience:

- Inability to concentrate
- Memory loss, confusion
- Lower productivity at work
- Sleeplessness, restlessness
- Moodiness, increased stress
- Anxiety, depression

“A Death in a Co-Worker’s Family Just Happened and I Don’t Know What to Say”

Avoiding the bereaved out of fear of saying something wrong will isolate them and add to their feeling of loneliness.

- Listen—don’t feel you need to say anything
- Don’t alienate the bereaved with statements like “I know how you feel”—you don’t
- Be patient—it takes months, even years for someone to work through the loss and deal with the changes.