

He was here – and just like that, he was gone...

"My world ended in a split second. Yet somehow, I was supposed to pick myself (and my young kids) up and carry on? I could barely catch a breath, let alone cope with this sudden and devastating loss".

Sarah Keast, 2021.

Widows Personal Testimonies

"It is lovely to know that Embrace FARM is there to help, support and listen whether it is the immediate aftermath of the accident, or months or in my case decades later"

"It was just so beautiful to be with people who understood"

"I gained so much love and support from everyone"

What is Grief?

Grief is a natural process of reaction and adjustment to loss and change. When we lose someone or something that is important to us, we grieve.

There are many stages of grief such as:

- denial,
- anger,
- bargaining,
- guilt,
- acceptance.

Yet there is no straight road through grief. The different stages of grief can happen over and over again and at times occur simultaneously. Grief is a personal and individual experience, what may be helpful for one person may not be helpful for another. Try not to compare your journey with others as there is no right or wrong way to grieve.



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Loss of a Spouse or Partner
You are not alone



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What you may experience

The death of a partner, at any age, is devastating and can be one of the most challenging events of your life.

You may experience many different emotions; from initial numbness and shock, to an often-overwhelming sadness at the unfairness of it all. The shock and disbelief can be overwhelming. You have had no opportunity to prepare, to say good-bye, to resolve misunderstandings, to tell them you love them or to prevent what has happened.

- A sudden traumatic death of a loved one can sometimes make us feel fearful and anxious. We can easily startle, worry constantly and no longer feel safe. If these feelings persist with disturbing or distressing memories or thoughts intruding into your sleep or daily thoughts, it would be important to talk to your GP or a professional. They will understand traumatic loss and the effects it can have on those left behind.
- You may feel like you are going crazy. You aren't! Everyone processes trauma differently and at the moment your mind is trying to come to terms with

this massive change in your world. You might say and do things that are out of character. Don't judge yourself for this, it will settle over time.

- Grief can also affect you physically – you may lose your appetite for example. After a sudden or traumatic death you might find it hard to sleep, or have nightmares, or become ill.
- Try not to make any big, important, life-changing decisions in the first to six to twelve months. It will take time to settle into this new life and be able to make thought-out, measured decisions again.
- Everyone in the family will deal differently with their grief and may need different types of support. Initially that support will be your extended family, friends, neighbours or a professional.
- Death and grief can make people uncomfortable. People can say the oddest and, sometimes, most hurtful things. Just be prepared to let it wash over you.

What may help

When someone close to you dies, everything can change in an instant.

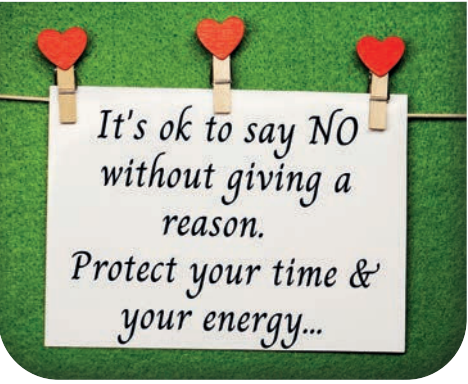
Initially you might find it helpful to keep busy and take care of practicalities like funeral arrangements, but at some point – perhaps after the funeral, for example – when your life appears to go back to “normal”, the reality of the loss can really hit home, leaving you wondering how you're going to survive. Here are some things that may help:

Continue bonds

Death ends a life, but it doesn't end a relationship. If you're used to sharing your day and your news with the person who has died, then perhaps continue to do this. Many people continue to talk to the person they have lost. This may sound strange, but it can bring comfort. Others find it helpful to write down what they want to say, in a journal or a letter.

Spend time with others

People around you may not want to intrude on your grief and may believe that you will contact them if you need to. It can be very hard to pick up the phone



or text someone to say you'd like to talk or go out; but it can be really helpful to find the courage to make that call/text. “Are you free for coffee?” is a gentle reminder to people that you may be in need of company and most friends and family want to be able to do something even if it's just to have that cup of tea or to go for a walk with you. Although it can be an effort to be proactive, it can be better than spending too much time alone. Along with keeping in touch with friends and family meeting others who have been through similar circumstances can be very helpful in the grieving process.

Listen to your body

If you need to cry, cry! If you need to sleep, sleep! If you need to talk to someone, then seek out someone who'll listen, whether that's a family member, friend, G.P. or bereavement support service.

Be gentle on yourself

Try to be gentle on yourself. Don't expect to run at full capacity with the same energy as you did before; grief can be exhausting.

You may find your ability to concentrate and focus is reduced for a time, so don't pressure yourself to perform as well as you did before your loss.

Take time

Many people who are bereaved find keeping themselves busy helpful. However, keeping yourself too busy and not allowing yourself time to ‘feel your grief’ can be a distraction from your grief and can be unhelpful.

Do the familiar things you used to do

When you feel up to it, perhaps do some activities and hobbies that you enjoy, or fancy trying. It could be visiting a place you haven't been to in a while, walks in nature, reading or crafts.

What may be unhelpful

- Many people may not know how to react appropriately to your grief. Some may be more comfortable than others in responding to you. Be aware that people have different ideas, not only about death but also about how bereaved people might behave.
- People may say things to you with the best of intentions that can seem insensitive, not meaning to cause you hurt.
- People can have all the best intentions yet sometimes they can drain your energy and thoughts with unhelpful advice which can lead to

you feeling more pressure and stress on top of your grief. Sometimes it is best to avoid them until you are stronger.

- Don't forget that it's ok to say No! You decide what is helpful for you and what is not (with no apology required!!)

There is no right time to do any of these things and there is no wrong time. There is only the time that is best for you. Listen to yourself.

7 healthy ways to say no

1. I am not strong enough yet to make decisions, I'll let you know when I am
2. I know I can say no to you, without it causing offence. I am grateful for our friendship.
3. You're someone I know I can trust to help me, but I am not able today.
4. No thank you, but it sounds lovely
5. Thank you for thinking of me, but please keep asking, maybe another time.
6. I would love to, but I am not feeling up to it right now.
7. Thank you for all your help, I now feel ready to try it alone.

If you need additional support, we are here for you

Grief is our natural reaction to a significant loss and most bereaved partners work through their grief with the support of family, friends and neighbours.

However, if you feel you would like additional support through our Encircle Programme please get in touch with us. #HereForYou

Embrace FARM Peer-to-Peer Supports

Embrace FARM offers Peer-to-Peer supports, connecting families who have been through similar circumstances through an active WhatsApp group and annual residential weekends

Embrace FARM Practical Supports (Encircle Programme)

In addition to your grief you may experience practical issues regarding the family farm which may require seeking some guidance on how to manage different areas. Embrace FARM offers free practical supports such as Legal, Financial, Succession and Agri Supports along with one-to-one Counselling for those who have lost a loved one within the farming community.

