

Checklist

Addressing Grief and Loss in Employees

1 Engage in a supportive gesture.

You and your team can support the employee by showing them that they are in your thoughts. Simple, supportive gestures are: sending a card or flowers on behalf of the team, attending the service, or preparing food for the employee.

2 Support productivity.

It is common when grieving to experience low energy, muscle aches and generalized tension. Avoid assigning new tasks and additional responsibilities. Try to reduce pressure by helping the employee organize their priorities.

3 Refer the employee to other supports.

Talk to the employee about other supports available, such as support groups for grief or FSEAP for grief counselling. If the loss has affected your team, reach out to FSEAP to arrange a group debriefing session.

4 Avoid clichés.

Avoid clichés that may minimize the employee's experience, such as "this too will pass", "it's for the best" and "time heals all things". Instead, try to make it personal. For example, "I know what a unique and special relationship you had. I'm sorry."

5 Remember that grief does not only occur in instances of death.

Grief and loss occur when an individual loses someone or *something* they loved. This could be a relationship, the loss of their health, the loss of financial stability or retirement, the loss of safety after a trauma and more. There is also no right or wrong way to grieve and will depend on personality, lifestyle, coping style and culture.

6 Let the employee cry.

It is normal to cry at any time when grieving and it is not helpful to try and stop it. If the crying is interfering with the work environment or customer service, talk to the employee about a safe and private place they can use if they need to cry.

7 Allow the employee to speak about their loss.

Sometimes the best thing you can do for someone who is grieving is to listen. Give space to allow the employee to talk openly about the feelings they are experiencing. Ask the employee if they would like to check in with the team or arrange a one-on-one meeting between yourself and the employee. Ask about how they have been coping and if there is anything more the work place can do to support them.

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