

Grief or loss

Grief is a reaction to the loss of something of significance. This may be the loss of your health or of a particular role, status, goal, pet or person, for example. The process of grieving can include a wide range of thoughts, feelings and reactions.

Often the extent of grief reflects the extent to which that part of your life was valued and the extent to which the loss came as a shock. However, all people experience grief very differently. Many people find working through the following steps are important in their journey through grief.

- **Accepting** that the loss is real
- **Experiencing and understanding** the pain associated with the loss. Whilst it may be tempting to try and avoid feelings of grief or pretend that “this isn’t happening”, this is not possible for long and is certainly not helpful in the long term
- **Adjusting** to the new environment after the loss. You may need to adapt to new responsibilities and just get used to that person or thing not being there
- **Reinvesting** in life, the present moment and **creating** a new relationship with what you have lost. For example, after a death, this may include remembering the relationship you had with the deceased, and understanding that it is okay to connect with the world and other people. This is important and does not mean that you are forgetting them

While most feelings of grief will dissipate with time, one of the best ways to help this process is to **talk to others about how you are feeling**. It is worth persevering even if the first person you speak to does not respond the way you had expected or hoped.

If you find that this is too difficult to do and that grief is enduring and interfering with your quality of life, consider speaking to a professional – your GP or a counsellor or psychologist, who is trained to provide strategies to help you with the necessary adjustment. When grief is not resolved it can lead to depression and other issues, so seeking help if your sadness persists is important.



The following strategies may also help:

- Put aside some time each day to **quietly reflect** on your emotions and fully experience them
- Allow yourself to **cry if you need to**. It is not weak, just part of the process
- Keep a **diary** of what you are thinking and how you are feeling. Having a record of this journey may be interesting to look back on
- Make the effort to see **some close friends or family** – it is likely to improve your mood
- Avoid making important, major decisions soon after your loss
- Seek professional help with things such as finances, jobs around the house or farm, or coping emotionally – **you do not need to do this alone**
- **Talking** can help you and those around you to adjust to changes
- If you have experienced the death of a loved one, some other specific strategies are:
 - » Writing to the deceased – including how you feel and what you are thinking
 - » Making a memorial – for example, planting a tree or making a photo album
 - » Remembering and celebrating the deceased on special days, such as their birthday

Learning techniques in the ifarmwell modules will also help.