



WHAT IS GRIEF ANYWAY?

Grief?

It starts with change....and loss.

Change is a normal part of life for everyone – whatever our age. It comes along in all sizes and for lots of reasons.

Some changes can be positive ones and we're glad they've happened. They can improve life for us.

Other changes can go by and we hardly even notice them or how they affect us.

But some changes can be tough. They can mean we end up with situations that we don't want. They can mean we lose something or someone, or lose having things the way we're used to them being. This kind of loss can turn our lives upside down, stress us and take lots of getting used to.

Children and young people often find difficult change like this especially confusing, unsettling and scary. They can do with all the support and understanding they can get – especially when the changes and losses prove hard for them to adjust to. It could be all kinds of life situation, such as:

family break up death dying bereavement illness disability accident
injury broken friendships moving being a victim of crime failing exams
bullying foster care making a big mistake family conflict sexual abuse new
step families unemployment death of a pet new family situations
someone in prison getting pregnant addictions physical abuse

**The thoughts, feelings and reactions we experience
when we're faced with change and loss - whatever our age - are known as
*grief.***

Grief reactions are the ways we express the feelings and thoughts we have that a change or loss can cause. Grief is a natural, normal human response. It's also the way we gradually adjust our lives to the reality of what's happened – whatever that might be.

Everyone grieves differently. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' way to experience grief. There's no secret 'method' that will take your grief instantly away. There are no 'rules'. There is no set timetable. Grief isn't a test. Grief isn't a race or a competition. And while it might be hard to believe, it does slowly get easier to handle.





A skylight information sheet

"Sometimes we have little control over how we react as we do. It just happens as it happens." - Yadana

"When I heard the news I couldn't think of anything to say or do. I just stood there for ages. I couldn't understand what I'd been told about the accident. I went totally blank and stayed that way until my parents came a couple of hours later." - Richard

"I feel all sorts of things. I just don't know which one to feel first." – Mereana

Grief can affect us more than just emotionally. It can affect us physically, mentally, socially and spiritually.

Your grief is like your fingerprint - unique and personal to you.



Sometimes the change and loss we face, and the grief we end up experiencing, can be very difficult to handle. Most people say they feel stronger, more sensitive and more aware after having to deal with a significant loss. Their lives gradually grow out around their loss and they find ways to make meaning from what's happened. They can move forwards in positive ways.

But grief *is* a difficult thing to live with, and live through. Looking for help and support makes sense. One day you'll be able to support someone else going through tough times. Find people you trust to talk with about what it's like for you.

If you'd like to, please do call **skylight** on 0800 299 100. We're here to help children and young people – and those caring for them – when change, loss and grief are making their life journey a rough ride.

