

# Grief Connected to MAiD

When someone in your life chooses Medical Assistance in Dying (MAiD), you may experience a range of emotions that may differ from those around you, including your loved one who has chosen MAiD. Grief is a personal journey for everyone and there is no right or wrong way to feel, but we must respect our emotions and allow ourselves the opportunity to process them in a way that is helpful and safe for us.

When a loved one has chosen to seek out MAiD, they will begin to take the required steps for approval. Depending on your loved one and their own personal choices, you may or may not have been aware that this end of life treatment was being thought of, discussed and/or sought out.

Once you are aware of your loved one's decision or approval for MAiD, you will begin to experience anticipatory grief. You may have racing thoughts, experience a range of emotions (confusion, anger, relief, sadness, etc.) and many questions for your loved one and/or their medical team.

As your loved one plans for and moves through their end of life journey, it is important that you are aware of your own personal beliefs, values, and attitudes around a person choosing to end their life, as this may impact your grief journey.

**Remember, this is a very personal and difficult decision that your loved one has made and is a decision that could only be made by them.**

**You're not alone.  
We're here to support.**

There is no timeline for grief. Knowing there are supports and resources available can give hope as you move through your grief.



## Factors

- **Your relationship with your loved one** (i.e. spouse, child, parent, friend).
- **Length of time your loved one suffered from their illness/condition.**
- **Nature of your relationship with your loved one** (i.e. close or connected vs. strained or conflictual).
- **Number of losses you have already experienced** (i.e. *Person(s)*: In cases of multiple deaths in a short period of time or loss of other relationships. *Things*: Loss of job, loss of home, etc.).








## Types of Grief

- **Anticipatory Grief:** Grieving your loss before death occurs.
- **Normative (Typical) Grief:** Emotional, physical, cognitive (mind health), behavioural, social, and spiritual responses that are experienced after the death of a person whom you were connected to.
- **Complex Grief:** Individuals who have been experiencing intense feelings of grief for longer than 6 months after the death of their loved one; or are experiencing extreme difficulties with day-to-day functioning (completion of tasks), which is negatively impacting their personal health and/or safety.



## Coping Strategies for MAiD Anticipatory Grief

If you have the opportunity, spending time with your loved one leading up to MAiD can provide a level of comfort during your grief.

-  Take time to listen to your loved one without judgment.
-  Don't allow your personal attitudes and/or values to negatively impact the remaining time you have with your loved one.
-  Talk to your loved one about who they may want to see or speak with and respect their decisions/requests.
-  Say things you feel need to be said, in a supportive manner.
-  Care for yourself. Take time to shower, eat, drink water, exercise – even a short walk. Ask for and accept help from others who you feel are supportive.

The grief you feel after MAiD can vary depending on your involvement and knowledge about your loved one's decision, your readiness and acceptance of their death, and the support you received/are receiving during your loved one's end of life journey. Everyone's reaction to grief is different; your grief will be based on your own personal needs at different points in time.

**We're a part of your story. Because everyone needs support.**



## Coping Strategies for Grief (after MAiD has occurred)

- Keep things simple; only do what is necessary.
- Be gentle with yourself; don't fault yourself for feeling confused, having trouble with concentration, or memory.
- Try not to make any major changes or important decisions during the first year; if you must, discuss them with someone you trust.
- Accept invitations to spend time with others.
- Stay connected with friends and/or family.
- Surround yourself with supportive people.
- Take time for solitude to reflect on your thoughts, feelings, and your grief journey.
- "Check in with yourself" Evaluate where you are within your own beliefs, values, and attitude surrounding your loved one's decision.
- Reach out to MAiD specific support groups or professional supports if needed.

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