



TM

**Knowing When
To Get Support**

Knowing When To Get Support

It is common for a grieving person to feel depressed, confused, disconnected from others, or like he or she is going crazy. But if the bereaved person's symptoms don't gradually start to fade - or they get worse with time - this may be a sign that normal grief has evolved into a more serious problem, such as clinical depression.

Signs and symptoms of depression include:

- ❑ **Feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.** A bleak outlook—nothing will ever get better and there's nothing he/she can do to improve their situation.
- ❑ **Loss of interest in daily activities.** No interest in former hobbies, pastimes, social activities, or sex. They have lost their ability to feel joy and pleasure.
- ❑ **Appetite or weight changes.** Significant weight loss or weight gain—a change of more than 5% of body weight in a month.
- ❑ **Sleep changes.** Either insomnia, especially waking in the early hours of the morning, or oversleeping (also known as hypersomnia).
- ❑ **Anger or irritability.** Feeling agitated, restless, or even violent. His/her tolerance level is low, temper is short, and everything and everyone gets on their nerves.
- ❑ **Loss of energy.** Feeling fatigued, sluggish, and physically drained. His/her whole body may feel heavy, and even small tasks are exhausting or take longer to complete.
- ❑ **Self-loathing.** Strong feelings of worthlessness or guilt. He/she harshly criticizes his/herself for perceived faults and mistakes.
- ❑ **Reckless behavior.** He/she engages in escapist behavior such as substance abuse, compulsive gambling, reckless driving, or dangerous sports.
- ❑ **Concentration problems.** Trouble focusing, making decisions, or remembering things.
- ❑ **Unexplained aches and pains.** An increase in physical complaints such as headaches, back pain, aching muscles, and stomach pain.¹

It can be tricky to bring up your concerns to the bereaved person as you don't want to be perceived as invasive. Instead of telling the person what to do, try stating your own feelings: *"I am troubled by the fact that you aren't sleeping – perhaps you should look into getting help."*

The first steps are always the toughest, but knowing where to look for help is a good start. Here are some places you can contact:

- Talk to your family doctor. She/he is a great resource and can link you to other professionals, if needed.
- Check out community mental health clinics or contact organizations such as the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) for information.
- Go online and find out about reputable, confidential mental health resources. Many provincial governments or community agencies across Canada offer anonymous telephone or web chat services.
- If she/he belongs to a church, talk with a member of the clergy.
- Don't forget friends and family.
- Call your local Victim Services Officeⁱ

ⁱ Help Guide.org - A Trusted, Non-Profit Resource. (n.d.).
Mental/depression_signs_types_diagnosis_treatment.htm.

ⁱⁱ Canadian Mental Health Association. (n.d.).
www.cmha.ca/mental_health/getting-help/#.UwdWqq6lbHo.



Caledon \ Dufferin
Victim Services

Support, Information, Referrals