

DEALING WITH GRIEF IN THE WORKPLACE

Employees who have lost a co-worker due to death might experience a number of feelings over the days and weeks following the death. Each individual's experience will vary and all are normal reactions to loss and aid in the healing process. Common experiences following a loss are:

- Numbness, shock, and disbelief
- Difficulty concentrating
- Sadness and tearfulness
- Increased anxiety
- Headaches, muscle tension, and stomach aches
- Anger, frustration, and blaming
- Difficulty sleeping or feeling fatigued
- Change in eating habits
- Irritability or agitation
- Depression and isolating from others

What to do:

- Acknowledge that things are different.
- Allow yourself to feel sad; cry if you feel like crying. Talk with a trusted friend.
- Get plenty of rest. If you cannot sleep, get out of bed and read or work on a project until you are tired enough to sleep.
- Exercise
- Utilize the support of your family, friends, and co-workers.
- Be aware of overreacting so as not to lash out at your co-workers or family.
- Recognize that grief changes over time. Not everyone will have the same reaction or time line.

How the workplace environment might be affected:

- There might be difficulties with productivity and attendance for those most affected by the loss.
- There might be feelings of guilt, resentment, or uneasiness for staff members who assume roles previously handled by the deceased co-worker.
- Certain work situations might serve as reminders of the loss and might trigger grief reactions unexpectedly.
- The emotional environment at work will be changed for a period of time.

How job performance might be affected:

- Continue as many daily responsibilities as possible.
- Recognize that you might be more forgetful or have difficulty concentrating.
- Take notes and write things down.
- Speak with your supervisor about delegating some of your responsibilities.
- Take some time to deal with your emotions if necessary.

*Note: For more information on any of these tips or if you or someone you know is having trouble adjusting to a loss, please contact ASAP.