

Disclosing Your Loss

As you work through the grief you feel after the loss of a loved one, you may encounter some situations where you choose to disclose your loss. No matter where you are in your grief process, these moments may be emotional. As you navigate the conversations of your loss with those around you, take into consideration the following:

The Details You Provide are Up to You

Whether you are having a conversation about your loss with a family member or with an acquaintance, the information you provide regarding the details surrounding the loss is up to you. There is a natural curiosity that others may feel leading to unintentional and insensitive questions. It is acceptable to recognize your own personal limitations and set boundaries with others on what you are willing to discuss. This boundary can be as simple as saying, "I'm not ready to talk about this" and changing the subject to something you are more comfortable discussing. These conversations provide you an opportunity to practice self-awareness as well as self-care. By being more mindful of what you are feeling in each interaction, it will allow you to better manage emotions—even with unexpected loss triggers.

People May Respond in Unexpected Ways

You may experience a few surprises as you disclose your loss. Some individuals may become overwhelmed by the news, others may respond a bit more insensitively, and many will be supportive and empathic. Aside from the different ways people process the news of the loss, you will discover that the topic of grief is challenging for many to manage and understand. It is common for those who first hear of the loss to feel a sense of disbelief, shock, and discomfort. As you disclose your loss to others, be mindful of your capacity for others responses to the information you decide to share. In thinking of yourself first during these moments, you also welcome the self-compassion needed to guide you during the grieving process.

You May Experience a Variety of Emotions Towards Others

Disclosing your loss to others may leave you feeling a multitude of emotions, both positive and negative. Common emotions reported by griever as they disclose their loss can include anger, irritability, disbelief, a sense of relief, and support. Understanding that this rollercoaster of emotions is a normal part of grieving encourages self-love and patience during this process. Allow yourself the time to decompress from these interactions in a safe space where you can sit with your emotions and process them in a healthy way.

It's Ok to Embrace the Moments of Support

As previously mentioned, those who hear of your loss may respond in unexpected ways, including a desire to comfort you in your grief. Many of these individuals have experienced a loss in their own lives and are eager to be supportive. Leaning on these individuals can expand your network of support and may relieve some of the emotional stressors you are facing at the moment. Grief can feel isolating; so, if you feel safe and ready, allow yourself to be embraced in the love and care of others.

For additional resources, visit our website at www.childbereavement.org. To register for our free virtual grief support groups, give us a call at (888) 988-5438 or e-mail support@childbereavement.org.

