



## **Dealing with death and grief in the workplace**

Feelings of sadness are normal after the death of a loved one. And everyone experiences grief differently. As a manager, it is important to know how we can support team members in the event of a lost loved one.

## Take these steps to help a bereaved worker

- **Acknowledge.** Immediately acknowledge the death with a note or flowers sent from management. Send a clear, simple message of support to the grieving person and to other staff to help them cope with the event.
- **Ask.** Asking how the bereaved member is doing and then listening to their response can be helpful.
- **Be open.** Maintain an “open door” policy with your team.
- **Offer flexibility**, if possible. Providing some flexibility in work hours, or time off, can help the worker cope with the combined stressors of work and grief.
- **Consider attending a service.** If there will be an open funeral service, you or another workplace representative can attend and convey the company’s condolences at that time. Make sure only to attend with the express permission of the bereaved team member.
- **Be patient.** Being patient and understanding that the grieving process takes time and that the worker will not quickly “snap out of it” will also help.
- **Offer resources.** Provide information on bereavement services. (See the section below, Share information on bereavement support.)

## Dealing with the loss of a co-worker

In the event of an team member’s death, here are some additional steps to take as well as things to consider.

- Respect confidentiality of personal or medical information unless permission has been given to share it with others. Be sure to find out what can be shared and what is confidential.
- Expect that productivity may be less than perfect for a time.
- If tasks must be redistributed, thank team members who may be taking on additional work or responsibilities.
- Be available to listen. Expect that team members may need to talk about the loss several times, especially during special dates.
- Share information for finding additional support.

## Share information on bereavement support

Show team members and family members how to find information, resources and support, if they have experienced loss. Through EAP services, team members can get guidance through the process. Resources can help ease some of the burden during this difficult time.

- **Funeral planning.** Team members and family members can call to speak with a specialist for assistance planning a funeral — from selecting a funeral home to cremation services or help with veteran’s benefits and more.
- **Financial assistance.** Planning a funeral can be trying emotionally, and it can be financially burdensome as well. EAP can help with referrals to financial services, including a free first visit with a financial counselor.
- **Support groups.** EAP can connect team members with options for over-the-phone and in-person support groups to help with grief counseling. To get started, they can call the EAP program.

Bereavement support services through EAP are available 24/7 at no cost. All information is confidential and available to you and your covered family members. For more information on your specific benefits, reach out to your account manager.

## Planning a remembrance for the loss of a co-worker

Traditions of grieving together and holding a funeral or memorial can help people cope. Here are a couple of suggestions that may help:

- Consider arranging a way for team members to share stories, memories and feelings.
- Think of personal ways employees can commemorate an employee. As examples, they could try lighting a candle, planting flowers or creating a commemorative photo journal.
- Also, you can plan a memorial, celebration or other service to commemorate a co-worker.



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