

FACT SHEET: GRIEF AND LOSS



What is grief?

Grief is a normal human response to losing someone or experiencing a traumatic event. People who have undergone an amputation regardless of the cause can also experience grief for the loss of their limb/s. Grief can also have a psychological impact on people.

Some people may grieve the loss of their limb for weeks or months, while for others the feeling of grief may last years; grief has no set time frame. Grief can affect people in different ways and is individual to the person. Understand that the feeling of grief and loss is normal, try to be patient with yourself and allow yourself the time you need to grieve the loss of your limb.



Limbs 4 Life™
Empowering Amputees



How can grief impact my life?

Many people go through what are called stages of grief. These can include:

- Anger
- Denial
- Guilt
- Acceptance
- Depression

These stages may not happen and you may not experience all of these and/or in any order. Working your way through these processes is personal. Some people can get stuck in some stages while others move back and forward during their recovery.

Are there physical symptoms to grief and loss?

Grief can affect many parts of your life including your sense of self and your identity. Grief and loss can impact your relationships with others, your physical health and your emotions. You may find that your ability to sleep is affected; too much or too little sleep, along with things like your appetite, physical pain and general discomfort, increase/reduction in body temperature among other physical concerns.

If you are experiencing the physical and emotional impact of grief and loss following your amputation it is important to talk to a member of your healthcare team or your local doctor. You may like to speak to a trained counsellor to help you deal with your emotions. Your doctor can assist you with a care plan and refer you to a healthcare professional. Visits to a healthcare professional can be subsidised via Medicare or via your insurance company.

Talk to the people in your life about how you are feeling. Stay connected to your friends. Share your thoughts with loved ones as this will help you deal with the changes of how your body looks and feels.

Other options to help you to manage grief and loss can include:

- Get involved with a Peer Support Program. Being with others who share a similar

experience can help to reduce feelings of isolation and help you to understand your feelings. Some Peer Support Volunteers may be able to relate to how you are feeling and can support you to adjust to the changes in your day-to-day life.

- Join a local support group. Amputee support groups provide a friendly and comfortable environment to share experiences with one another.
- If you don't wish to meet with a peer face to face, take part in an online discussion group. Online groups can provide connections to the wider community.

What are the next steps?

Even though it may take time, you can move through the grief and loss process. If you or someone you know is in danger call 000.

Alternatively, if you are having trouble coping with your emotions you can contact:

Lifeline

www.lifeline.org.au

13 11 14

- *Online crisis support chat*

Beyond Blue

www.beyondblue.org.au

- *Online peer support forum*
- *Online chat*

Grief Line

www.griefline.org.au

1300 845 745

- *Online counselling service*

SANE Australia

www.sane.org

1800 187 263

- *Online chat*

You can find more information at www.limbs4life.org.au/news-events/news/practical-coping-strategies-to-help-amputees-and-their-families

For more information and to request Peer Support call **1300 78 2231** or visit limbs4life.org.au.