

When A Co-Worker Dies

People who work together are like extended families, and when a person dies, friends and co-workers grieve. When the death is unexpected, as from violence or an accident, it can be particularly traumatic.

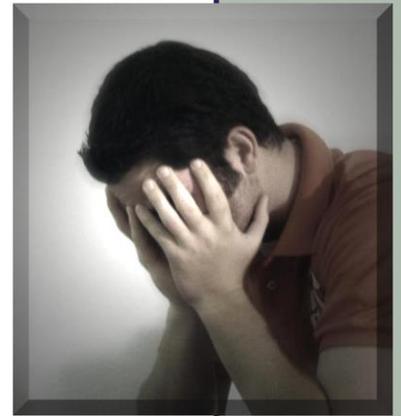
Take the Time To Grieve

You and your co-workers will need time to grieve. Some things to do:

- Create a memorial board. A photo, card, or special item the person kept on her desk can be a way to remember.
- Hold or participate in a fund-raiser for a special cause or for the family of the deceased.
- Create a book of memories to give to the family. Many people are not aware for the work-life of people they love. These will be unique memories for the family—and a way for you to privately express feelings and memories.
- Conduct a workplace—only event. A luncheon or office-only memorial is a chance for co-workers to acknowledge their unique relationship with the deceased.

What to Expect

- People experience grief differently. You or a co-worker who is particularly close to a person who died may feel depressed, absent-minded, short tempered, or exhausted. These are all normal feelings.
- Creating healthy memories is part of healing. Some people find talking about the deceased helps them manage their grief. Others keep to themselves. Respect the fact that others may feel the loss more or less strongly than you, or cope differently.
- A death generates questions and fears about our own mortality. If a co-worker dies, you may feel guilty or angry at the person, at life, or at the medical profession. It may cause you to question your own life. These are normal emotions.
- Beware of how you react to a deceased co-workers replacement. Your anger or disappointment at her performance, personality or work style may be less a function of the individual than your grief about the person they are replacing.
- Get help if you have trouble coping with the loss of you co-worker or if you find that your work is suffering. A lag in you performance could be a signal that this loss is affecting you more profoundly than you thought.



For help with dealing with grief, call the EAP at 800-327-7272 or visit the web site at www.lytleap.com


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