

Understanding Grief and Loss

Important note

This worksheet is an educational support tool, not a replacement for professional mental health support. If difficult emotions arise, seeking professional help is a sign of strength.

Worksheet: Support, Normalisation & Gentle Care

Purpose:

This worksheet is designed to support understanding and normalisation of grief and loss, while encouraging gentle care and stability. It is not intended to analyse or revisit painful experiences, but to help you recognise what is normal, what is supportive, and what may help you feel steadier during times of loss.

Go at your own pace. You may skip any section that does not feel helpful.

Part 1: Normalising Grief

Grief looks different for everyone. There is no single “right” way to experience loss.

Read the statements below and tick or note any that feel true for you:

- Grief comes and goes in waves
- Some days feel heavier than others
- I can function while still feeling grief underneath
- I may feel tired or less motivated at times
- I sometimes feel “okay” and then feel surprised by sadness later

Reflection (optional):

What stands out to you about how grief shows up?

Part 2: Understanding What Your Experience Does Not Mean

Grief can sometimes create unhelpful beliefs.

Gently reflect on the statements below:

- Struggling does **not** mean I'm failing
- Taking time does **not** mean I'm stuck
- Having mixed emotions does **not** mean I didn't care
- Wanting distraction does **not** mean I'm avoiding
- Needing support does **not** mean I'm weak

Which of these feels most important to remember right now?

Part 3: Supporting Yourself Gently

During grief, support often comes from **small, steady actions**, not big changes.

Consider the areas below:

- One thing that helps me feel a little steadier:

- One routine or habit that feels grounding:

- One way I can reduce pressure on myself right now:

Part 4: Understanding Fluctuations

Grief is not consistent. It often shifts depending on energy, reminders, stress, or support.

Reflect gently:

- When my grief feels heavier, what might be contributing?
(e.g. tiredness, stress, anniversaries, lack of support)

- When things feel lighter, what might be helping?

Part 5: Support and Connection

You do not have to talk about everything to be supported.

Consider:

- Who feels emotionally safe or supportive for me right now?

- What type of support feels most helpful?
(e.g. quiet presence, practical help, conversation, space)

How to Access Further Support in New Zealand:

- Contact your local GP
- Dial 111 for immediate support
- Free call or text 1737 any time for support from a trained counsellor
- Lifeline – 0800 543 354 (0800 LIFELINE) or free text 4357 (HELP)
- Youth line – free text 234, call 0800 376 633, webchat at youthline.co.nz, DM on Instagram @youthlinenz, message on Whats App 09 886 56 96.
- Samaritans – 0800 726 666
- Suicide Crisis Helpline – 0508 828 865 (0508 TAUTOKO)
- Depression Helpline – 0800 111 757 or free text 4202 To talk to a trained counsellor about how you are feeling or to ask any questions
- Anxiety NZ – 0800 269 4389 (0800 ANXIETY)