

# Dealing with Grief

*From the outside looking in, it's hard to understand,  
from the inside looking out, it's hard to explain.*



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## Make Space for Grief

Losing a loved one casts a shadow over your life and your studies, making it challenging to fully engage with everyday life. It's normal to feel sad, angry, remorseful, or numb. You may also feel depressed and struggle to find meaning in your daily life. Memories of love and painful flashbacks can create a constant emotional tug-of-war, but your physical well-being may also be affected. Exhaustion, poor concentration, weakened immunity, difficulty sleeping, feeling cold; it is as if you have lost your sense of self.

### Regain energy

Grief is a journey that can ebb and flow over years. With time and support, you can integrate the loss, cherish memories, regain energy, and embrace life again. It is important to acknowledge both the loss and the path to healing. We can help you with that!



#### Time to Grieve

- Looking at photos
- Bringing up memories
- Crying
- Talking about it
- Listening to music
- Writing or drawing



#### Time to Recover

- Sports & Outdoors
- Structuring your day
- Sleeping & relaxing
- Seeing friends
- Going out
- Studying

*"When I moved into a new student house it was hard. Nobody knew my mum had died and I didn't know how to talk about it. Now I have photos of her in my room, which helps me tell my story."*

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## Talking about Grief

Talking about the death of a loved one is difficult. The grieving person may worry about dominating the conversation or causing discomfort with their emotions. The person offering support worries about causing tears or saying the wrong thing. Starting a conversation can be difficult for both parties. Use these starters to find relief and healing through dialogue.

*"My best friend's death left me feeling isolated, like there was a glass wall separating me from other students. I would join in and laugh, but it lacked sincerity. I discovered that engaging in meaningful conversations about my grief brings a better sense of balance."*

### Conversation Starters



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## How the University can Help

- If you need to take a break from your studies or temporarily need to take less ECTS, contact your study advisor or the student dean.
- Check out the (free) e-health platform 'gezondeboel' for online courses on sleeping, study-life balance, mindfulness, worrying etc.
- Join the monthly Grief & Writing workshop; take time to write, share and find support. Organised by Spectrum, led by Marloes Harkema, student life coach at Wageningen University & Research.
- Spectrum Student Platform and Chaplaincy also organises weekly meditations, monthly Retreat & Recharge evenings and other meaningful activities where you can make space for grief.
- Check out the Student Training & Support website to see if a peer coach, student life coach or a student psychologist can help you.

*"A fellow student in our organisation struggled with severe depression. Despite knowing he wasn't well, his suicide came as a shocking blow. Recently, we held a memorial to mark a year since his passing. It made me feel sad and powerless again and I had trouble sleeping and concentrating that week. It really helped me to talk to someone!"*

