

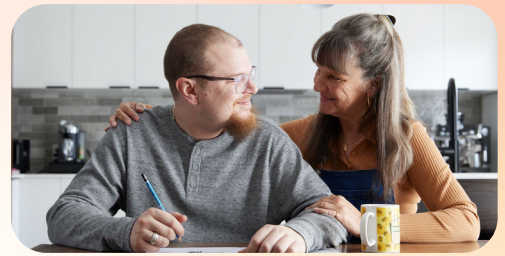


# Grief and serious illness: Support for people living with serious illness

## Understanding grief

Living with serious illness can be difficult. It can bring loss and grief. From the time of diagnosis, you may grieve the loss of your health, independence, or your future plans. You may also grieve changes in your relationships.

These losses can bring up a variety of emotions and physical responses, such as sadness, anger, fatigue, or loss of appetite. These normal reactions may come and go.



## How palliative care can help

Palliative care is not only for people at the end of life. It is about improving quality of life at any stage of illness. It is holistic care that focuses on managing symptoms and easing stress for people living with serious illness and those closest to them. Palliative care supports physical, emotional and spiritual needs. It can benefit people of any age, in any setting, even while receiving other treatments. Ask a care team, including a family doctor, nurse, or other community supports, to explain how to access palliative care.

### Care teams can:

- Listen and support you
- Help you talk about what matters most to you
- Support your physical, emotional, spiritual, and social needs
- Support those who are closest to you
- Connect you to community resources or online support

## Taking care of yourself

Grief is a natural response to loss. Having a serious illness can make you feel grief. Grief can change over time and it is normal for it to feel stronger at unexpected moments. Be patient and gentle with yourself as you adjust to living with serious illness.

### Ways to support yourself:

- Trust that the grief you feel is real
- Give yourself time to process your thoughts and feelings
- Connect with others who understand what you are going through— this could be a peer support group, an online community, or someone you feel comfortable talking to
- Make time for things that bring you peace and comfort
- Ask for and accept help from people who care whenever you can

Care teams and trusted community leaders can connect you with available local or online grief support resources. These may include community groups, counsellors, or cultural supports.

[Canada.ca/palliative-care](https://Canada.ca/palliative-care)

[AboutGrief.ca](https://AboutGrief.ca)