



The Compassionate
Friends Australia



When a sibling dies –
information for
Bereaved Siblings

Normal grief reactions...

We are unprepared for the reality of grief. Not knowing what is 'normal' can cause further anxiety. Below are some typical reactions.



Remember that whatever you are feeling is normal for you and that's OK.

Helpful hints for supporting grieving people

- ✓ **Offer practical support...**such as meals, shopping, gardening, errands, looking after siblings etc. Don't wait to be asked and be mindful that bereaved families may still need this support in the early years.
- ✓ **Don't judge...**there is no right or wrong way to grieve. Don't say 'you should...' or 'you shouldn't...' Simply listening is far more helpful.
- ✓ **Accept a wide variety of emotions...**such as sadness, anger, confusion, fear, guilt or relief. You cannot make someone feel worse or 'remind' them of their grief. They are living with it every day.
- ✓ **Say the name of their loved one...**listen and allow the grieving person to talk.
- ✓ **Avoid clichés...**such as 'At least you have other children', 'It was meant to be' or 'They're in a better place'. Well meaning statements like these are unhelpful and often hurtful.
- ✓ **Don't assume...**people who are grieving aren't necessarily showing it. Ask how they are feeling/coping/managing with genuine concern.
- ✓ **You can't fix it...**no one can take away the pain and sadness but knowing that people care, is comforting and healing.



When a sibling dies

The loss of a sibling can be devastating. Yet many find that others in their community do not understand the depth and intensity of their grief.

Grieving the death of your sibling has no time frame and the emotions can be intense and overwhelming.

Some find their loss is difficult to comprehend and speak about to others.

Bereaved siblings are sometimes known as the forgotten grievers.

The Compassionate Friends Sibling Support volunteers and staff understand what it is like.

All are trained in peer support and have lived experience of losing a sibling.

We offer a safe, healing space for siblings to find comfort and support on their individual and unique grief journey.

Give yourself permission to grieve

“Not long after my sister died everything just ground to a halt and I realised I needed help. At The Compassionate Friends I found people who understood what I was going through. I got the support I so needed.”

“There is immeasurable power in being recognised and acknowledged in your grief.”



About us

Every member of The Compassionate Friends has experienced the devastating death of a child in their family.

We provide a haven to share memories of your child, brother, sister or grandchild, both sad and happy, as often as you need, without judgement or a lack of understanding.

The Compassionate Friends provides a peaceful haven for people to come and grieve their loved one and connect with others who share the painful journey that comes when a child dies.

It is a place where you will receive a warm welcome, a gentle hug and the opportunity to talk about your child, sibling or grandchild without judgement or interruption.

Contact can be made in a variety of ways, such as:

- Drop-in centres to talk over a cuppa
- 24-hour grief support number
- Support groups
- Sibling chat service
- Email
- Online

Whatever contact option works best, you will always be talking to someone who has lived through the death of a child in the family.

Some of the services we offer include:

- 24-hour grief support via the phone
- Support and social groups
- Workshops to support the healing process
- Library of grief resources
- Special memorial events
- Newsletter with contributions from members.

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24/7

**grief support
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