When grief gets stuck

Sometimes grief does not ease, and extra help is needed.

For most people, the raw pain of grief gradually softens. They still miss the person, and they are able to take part in life again. For some, the grief stays as intense as in the first weeks, or gets worse, and life stays on hold.

Signs that grief may be stuck

These are worth attention if they are still strong and getting in the way of life many months on (as a rough guide, six months to a year or more).

- [ ] Constant, intense longing or preoccupation with the person
- [ ] Feeling that part of me died with them
- [ ] Being unable to accept that they are gone
- [ ] Avoiding anything that reminds me of the death
- [ ] Intense bitterness, anger or guilt
- [ ] Feeling that life is meaningless or empty
- [ ] Feeling numb, or cut off from other people
- [ ] Being unable to plan or picture a future
- [ ] Not being able to get back to work, friends or interests

What can make it more likely

- A sudden, violent or traumatic death, or the death of a child
- A very close or very dependent relationship, or things left unresolved
- Little support, several losses close together, or earlier depression or trauma

What helps

Getting stuck is not your fault and is not a sign of weakness. There are therapies designed for this, which help you face the reality of the loss, work through what was left unfinished, and begin to rebuild a life that still has the person in it.

Talk to your GP or therapist
if you recognise yourself here, and straight away if you are having thoughts of wanting to die or to join the person.

If you need help right now (Ireland)

In an emergency	Call **112** or **999**, or go to your nearest emergency department.
Samaritans	Freephone **116 123**, any time, day or night. Email jo@samaritans.ie
Text About It	Free text **HELLO** to **50808**, any time, for an anonymous text conversation.
Pieta	Freephone **1800 247 247**, any time, or text **HELP** to **51444**. For thoughts of suicide or self-harm.
Your GP	Contact your GP or the out-of-hours GP service in your area.

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