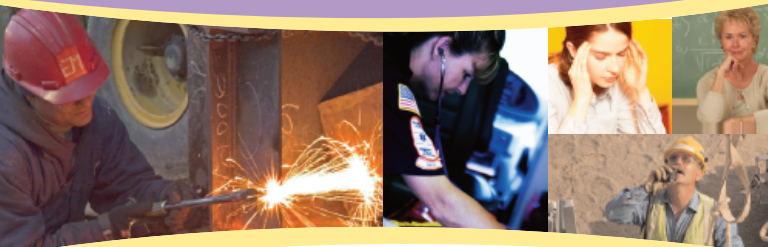




Ask to Come Home. Ask for Caldwell Hospice.



When an Employee Dies: What to Do

Everyone experiences loss when a co-worker dies, and everyone needs to grieve that loss. Ashewood Grief and Counseling Services can assist managers in supporting their employees during the grief journey, fostering healing, and maintaining a productive work environment.

When Notified of an Employee's Death

- Inform staff immediately and individually, if possible.
- For a large staff, contact supervisors and ask them to notify employees.
- Be prepared for emotional reactions, and let employees know whether it is okay for them to go home.
- Let employees know whether it is okay for them to spend some time commiserating, after they are informed.
- Ask the family members whether they want to receive calls from the deceased's co-workers or would prefer being left alone.

Common Reactions to Loss

Grief is a natural reaction to loss, and each employee will grieve in his or her own way and time. Even when employees show no outward signs of grief, they may be experiencing difficulties and need support.

- Anxiety
- Denial
- Withdrawal
- Difficulty concentrating
- Forgetfulness
- Irritability
- Apathy
- Guilt
- Lack of interest
- Headache or body aches

Offering Support to Grieving Employees

- Become familiar with your organization's employee assistance program (EAP) and bereavement leave policy.
- Prepare for a change in your staff members' energy level, motivation, and morale, following the death.
- Try to be flexible with performance expectations, when possible.
- Be available: employees may need to talk about the loss.
- Consider providing a support session or program for grieving employees.
- Monitor and be sensitive to co-workers' reactions, when a replacement for the deceased is hired.
- Be prepared for a range of reactions among your employees, during the time following the death.
- Suggest raising money for a special cause in memory of the deceased—or to benefit the deceased's family, if appropriate.
- Help to plan and facilitate staff memorial activities, if necessary. If possible, let your staff attend the employee's funeral, without using leave time.

(Source: NHPCO's *It's About How You Live At Work* series.)

"As much as you might wish, you cannot turn grief off when you come to work. Accept your grief. Recognize that as you grieve, certain days may be easier than others. Be gentle with yourself."

— Dr. Kenneth J. Doka

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