

## Bereavement – College Counselling Blog #7

As Covid restrictions are removed and we ease ourselves back into a new academic year, all the talk is of how things are;

'getting back to normal'....'life is returning'....'everything is opening up'.

I'm very aware that for many people, while they'd like those things to be true, the reality is very different. For anyone who has lost a close family member, whose friend has died or whose partner has passed away, life might not be returning to normal. It may feel very different.

There are many different ways to refer to death – he passed away, we lost someone, they're resting in peace, she lost her battle, or just simply died. And we talk of the experience of bereavement, grieving, struck by sorrow, loss and pain.

It feels right that we have all these different ways of describing death and bereavement, because what each person goes through is different – not just because of who has died, but also because of your relationship with them and what they meant to you. It's also different for each person because we feel things differently – that's natural!

I remember working with someone a while ago whose friend had died and her being worried that she wasn't grieving in the right way, that she wasn't 'feeling it enough'. She was torn because life was getting back to normal, but that felt disloyal like she'd forgotten her friend. She knew that her friend would want her to carry on living and enjoying life, but at the same time felt guilty, as if she was letting her down. Then at other times she'd feel her loss very intensely and feel lonely and angry that other people couldn't see what she was going through.

And that's what grief can be like – confusing! A whole mix of pain and guilt, loneliness and worry, sadness and anger....and sometimes even a bit of laughter when a happy memory pops up.

For many people whose loved ones died during the last 18 months, feelings might be even more complicated because of Covid and lockdown; if they weren't able to grieve in the normal way with people gathered around them, they might be

feeling the loss more now that things are 'getting back to normal', but finding it difficult to say that because they feel like everyone else is moving on and looking forward.

The most important thing is to try not to judge yourself for whatever range of feelings you're having – none of them are 'wrong'. If you can find someone to talk it through with, someone who will listen, then do – even if it feels like it won't come out right or won't make sense, try to give it a go. Talking might help you make sense of what you're feeling.

And remember the counselling service is here, just drop us an email at:

[counsellorreferral@nptcgroup.ac.uk](mailto:counsellorreferral@nptcgroup.ac.uk)