

# **Living Through Loss Counselling Society of BC**

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## **HOW TO SUPPORT A MALE GRIEVER**

1. Men tend to be private in their grief and have a reluctance to express their emotions:
  - Give information about the grief process and what to expect. Offer support in ways that do not make him feel more incompetent than he already does. Also review support systems.
2. Men mourn differently than women. They tend to keep busy rather than spend time with their pain:
  - This is not a bad thing, so don't determine his grief needs. Help him find a comfortable way to express emotions and gain a sense of control over his life. Example: he may have to work through his emotions in physical ways such as exercise rather than talking about feelings.
3. Men express anger and aggression at the pain in their lives:
  - Anger represents the protest at the loss. It is a normal part of the grief process – “do not take it personally” – but support expression of pain.
  - Help him express his emotions and to understand that anger is a secondary emotion, often covering up sadness or hurt.
4. Men rarely ask for compassion support, affection or professional help:
  - Don't disorient him with too many questions or talk about the future. Helpers often do this in response to their own helplessness.
  - Give practical assistance. Provide a safe comfortable environment. Suggest a routine and some structure to his day. Make sure he is not at risk to hurt himself. Above all be respectful of his wishes.
5. Men return to “normal functioning” more quickly than women:
  - Each person is unique in the way they process grief. Do not assume that there are time frames to do the grief work.