What is grieving?

Grieving can be experienced in lots of different ways. There is no ‘right’ way to grieve. However you experience or express your grief is okay. You may:

- Experience waves of sensations (emotional and physical)
- Cry a lot. It is normal. Tears help produce endorphins that help us manage the pain
- Get distracted momentarily, and then have a realisation, which causes you distress

Period of suffering:

- Slowly, over time, the intensity of the experiences of grief will lessen
- At times you might even notice that life has some enjoyment again
- The first year is often the worst.
- Overtime you will realise you have started to re-establish something that resembles ‘normal’ life.

Common Feelings/behaviour

- Guilt
- Blame (yourself/others/a god)
- How the outcome could have been prevented
- Feeling emotionally numb
- Irritable
- Loss of meaning in life
- risk taking behaviour
- Anger/frustration
- Bargaining with God or a higher power.
What helps?

**Fostering positive thoughts and behaviours**

- Spend time talking with family, friends, colleagues
- Give yourself permission to have, express, and accept your feelings
- Commemoration - make plans for community service, plan rituals, pay respects
- Trust that it will be easier over time to live with (learn to live with it)
- Ask yourself “would the person who passed want you to suffer in this way?”
- Seek help if the impact on you is severe or lasts longer than you think is okay
- Understand that for some people grieving becomes a duty and is an expression of respect for the one who has died or a way of holding connection to the missed loved one.

**Dealing with negative thoughts and behaviours**

- Apologise if you react / ‘lash out’ at others. It is likely they will understand
- If you feel depressed or suicidal, talk to friends, family, and health professionals
- Irritable – take time out. Let others know your mood.
- Allow negative thoughts/images to occur. Let them pass through your mind
- If you are finding it difficult to deal with your normal responsibilities ask for help
- Try to resist being overly self-critical
- Whilst driving - If your emotions become strong then stop and take a break
- Be cautious and realistic about alcohol consumption – drink with friends. Set a limit.