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# sudden loss & the grief that follows

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Information and support  
for families after a  
workplace death

**icare**<sup>™</sup>

**icare** would like to thank the many families who have shared their stories of losing a loved one. We have learned so much from you.

Thank you to Ellen and Kathy for their open letters about their experience of loss and grief, and the years that follow. It is hoped that their courage might give you comfort when it is most needed.

## Acknowledgement

Thank you to SafeWork NSW and the Australian Government Department of Health for providing information about supporting bereaved families.

### Disclaimer

This publication contains work health and safety and workers compensation information. It may include references to some of your entitlements or obligations under various legislation. While every reasonable effort has been made to ensure that the information in this publication is current and correct at the time of publication, **icare** makes no warranties of any kind about its accuracy, currency or suitability for any particular purpose.

This publication does not represent a comprehensive statement of the law as it applies to particular problems or to individuals or as a substitute for legal advice. To ensure you comply with your legal obligations you must refer to the appropriate legislation. Information on the latest laws can be checked by visiting the NSW legislation website [www.legislation.nsw.gov.au](http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au). You should seek independent legal advice if you need assistance on the application of the law to your situation.

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## Foreword

On behalf of the **icare** family, I would like to express my sincere condolences to you and your family at this difficult time. Our hearts are saddened by your loss and our thoughts are with you.

In an effort to assist you and your family, the following information outlines some of the things that might need to happen both straight away and some things that might help over time. It also provides details of who may be in contact with you and other organisations that are available for advice and support.

Grief is very personal to everyone and dealt with in many different ways. We have collected a few stories from people who were happy to share them with you, who are grieving someone they lost too.

In our small way, we hope that you find this information helpful and more importantly we will do our best to help where and when we can. Please just ask.

John Nagle, CEO and Managing Director



*“Grief is not a disorder, a disease or sign of weakness. It is an emotional, physical and spiritual necessity, the price you pay for love. The only cure for grief is to grieve.”*

*Earl Grollman*



## who is involved and why

*When someone dies at work, you may be contacted by several agencies who might ask you for information about your loved one, or to provide information and support. This section tells you a little about who they are and why you might hear from them.*

They include:

- **NSW Police**
- **SafeWork NSW**
- **The NSW Coroner**
- **The Insurance Agent**  
(providing claims services on behalf of **icare**)

**NSW Police** may attend the site when a serious workplace incident occurs. If the police are involved they may:

- Tell the family of the person who has died
- Inform SafeWork NSW and the Coroner that a death has occurred
- Accompany a family member or close friend to identify the person who has died
- Collect statements from colleagues, witnesses and sometimes family in order to prepare a police report

**What you can do:** if the police are involved, you can keep in touch with the allocated Police Officer who can provide you with updates about the investigation.

**SafeWork NSW** is the state NSW Government work, health and safety regulator, who investigates serious workplace incidents. SafeWork NSW inspectors will conduct an investigation to determine what happened and may be in touch with you to gather information which may help.

In some instances where it appears that Work, Health and Safety laws have been broken, SafeWork NSW may initiate legal proceedings in the District Court of NSW. If this happens, the Coordinator, Family Liaison will talk with you about the investigation or any action being taken.

**What you can do:** you can contact the SafeWork NSW Coordinator, Family Liaison on 1800 806 626 about the role of SafeWork NSW. In some instances, counselling may also be available through this agency.

**The NSW Coroner** is responsible for confirming:

- The identity of the person who died
- When, where, how and why they died (medical cause of death)

The Coroner may decide that an inquest is necessary to answer these questions. Alternatively, the Coroner may not recommend an inquest if the information given by the police, SafeWork NSW and medical specialists provides the necessary answers. You can request a copy of the police and SafeWork NSW report that are provided to the Coroner about the incident.

**What you can do:** you can find out more information by contacting the Coronial Information and Support Program (CISP) on 02 8584 7739. Information and support services including counselling may be available through this service.

**Workers Compensation Case Manager:** If liability of the death at work is accepted, payment of benefits will be made by the insurer. There is legislation that specifies what benefits are paid and who they are paid to. Benefits which may be paid include:

- A contribution to the cost of funeral expenses
- A lump sum payment - this is normally paid to anyone who is considered to have been dependent for support on your loved one. In some circumstances, the money is paid to the estate
- Weekly payments for each dependent child

Claims services are provided on behalf of **icare** and a Case Manager will contact you to explain the claims process.

Due to restrictions on the sharing of information between different agencies, you may find that the Case Manager or the investigator acting on their behalf asks for information which has already been provided to someone else (such as a SafeWork investigator).

They may need to obtain reports or organise an investigation to find out more about the circumstances of the death of your loved one. This may involve engaging a factual investigator to interview people who have knowledge about your loved one's death. This may be frustrating, however, providing the information as quickly as you can will help to speed up the investigation process.

#### Access to counselling through the Workers

**Compensation Case Manager:** counselling may be helpful to you now, or in the months to come, to help with the overwhelming feelings that many people experience after a traumatic death. **icare** now provide professional counselling services for the immediate family members, including children, of the person who has died.

Counselling services are provided by an independent counselling service at no cost to you, and is completely confidential. The service will be available for you and your family to use at any time for 18 months from the date of the incident, and each family member can have up to 6 counselling sessions. You can meet with a counsellor face to face, or you may prefer to have telephone or on line counselling. We will work with you and your needs to find a counselling solution to help you through this time.

Your Case Manager will have talked with you about the counselling service, including how to make an appointment. Please call your Case Manager if you would like more information, or call **icare** to speak with a person in our Specialist Support team on 02 9216 3375 who can talk with you about the service and help you to make an appointment.

Your Workers Compensation Case Manager will:

- Provide information and access to counselling support services for immediate family members
- Examine the circumstances of injury and other information to decide if compensation can be paid (this is called determining liability)
- Provide the outcome of that decision in writing, including what you should do if you disagree with the decision

**What you can do:** stay in contact with your Case Manager and provide what information you can so that a decision can be made as quickly as possible. Ask questions - if your Case Manager doesn't have the answer, they may be able to help you find the right person to help you. Take up the offer of counselling and encourage your family to as well; it might really help you, or help you to support others through this time.



**grief: everyone's  
way is different  
(and that's ok)**

*Your own experience and expression of grief will be different from anyone else's. You may seek company or need solitude in your sadness; you might express your feelings openly with others, or reflect on your feelings privately. You may do all of these things at different times as your needs change, and that's ok.*

There is no right or wrong way to grieve, but there are emotional reactions which are common to most people when somebody dies. You may experience some or all of these feelings with varying intensity, in no particular order, and some feelings may return again and again, and for a time, feel overwhelming.

It might be helpful for you to recognise these to know that you are not going mad; you're grieving.

## Shock

The loss of someone close to you is a tremendous shock and when it is unexpected, the feelings are intensified. You may experience shock for days, weeks or for some, months after the death.

## Feeling numb

You may experience a period of feeling 'numb'; like living in a fog, you may think, 'this can't really be happening', and that you will wake up from it. This numbness is our mind's way of protecting us for a short time from the loss. This is why some people are able to participate in the practical arrangements after the death, or may not cry at the funeral. However, once the shock wears off, the loss becomes real and the emotional pain emerges.

## Disbelief & searching

It's natural to have difficulty believing what has happened is real; on one level you know that your loved one has died, but on another level it's impossible to accept. Moving between denial and realisation is a natural part of mourning and coming to terms with your loss. You may also find yourself unconsciously searching for your loved one – talking to their photographs, looking for them on the street and waiting for them to walk through the door. Confusion, panic and fear are common during this time.

## Physical & emotional stress

Grief may be felt both physically and mentally. You may feel restless and exhausted at the same time, you may have disturbed dreams and find it difficult to concentrate or remember things. This intense emotional pain may feel like physical pain and you may experience dizziness, palpitations, shakiness, headaches, nausea and changes in appetite (under- or over-eating).

## Anger

Feeling angry is a natural response to loss; intense feelings of rage often reflect a sense of helplessness at not being about to change what has happened. Anger may be directed at friends and others for carrying on with their lives as if nothing has happened. You may even feel anger towards the person who died. Anger is often felt most intensely shortly after the death but lessens over time.

## Despair

Feelings of despair are common once you fully realise that your loved one is not coming back. Relationships with others are often affected because you feel drained and numb. You may feel that there is no purpose and feelings of suicide are not uncommon.

## Fear

A significant loss can trigger different worries and fears. You may panic that this could happen to someone else in your family and become overly protective of them. You may also worry about the responsibilities you now face.

## Grief & depression

Deep sadness and despair can feel a lot like depression, and people who have experienced a deep loss can be prone to depression for some years following the death. If your grief leads to a lasting depression however, additional help may be appropriate (you can find out more on page 28).



## Some things you can do for yourself

- **Spend time with people who know what you're going through** and who allow you to be open about your feelings
- **Find a space where you can be alone** when you need to
- If it's right for you, let others know that it's ok to say your loved one's name, to talk about them, to remember and share stories about them
- **Ask for help and let people help you.** Others feel helpless by a death too – helping you lets them show that they care. Practical tasks such as cooking, picking up/dropping off kids, grocery shopping and lawn mowing are some examples
- **Cry when you need to.** Crying releases endorphins which reduces stress and produces a calming effect
- Little things might upset you that normally wouldn't.  
**It's ok – grief presents in many small ways**
- **Be patient with yourself and others** – you will have good days and bad days
- **Talk with others who have lost a loved one** – it may help you feel less alone. The contacts page has some counselling and support service contacts that may assist (see page 30)
- **Try not to make any major decisions** in the months that follow, such as moving house or changing routines; familiarity can be helpful during this time
- **Remind yourself that there is no time limit on grieving,** and there is no 'right' way to grieve. Your way of grieving is the right way for you


## What others have shared

It can be helpful to know how others who have been through a loss have reacted, and to remember that there is no right or wrong way to respond to the loss of a loved one. Some families have said:



*“I talk to him when the kids go to bed, sometimes out loud and sometimes in my thoughts.”*

*“Our daughter writes letters that I ‘post’ in a special post box to heaven. She includes drawings, treasures, things she’s found. We talk about what daddy would say when he gets them.”*




*“I still sign Christmas cards from my husband and I. After so many years of writing cards from both of us, it doesn’t feel right to just put my name.”*

*“My husband still goes to our son’s grave every day and it’s been more than a year. He tells me he talks to him, and sometimes he says he even argues with him! He seems better afterwards; I think it helps him to feel close to him still.”*

*“For a long time I set his place at the dinner table. Nobody ever said anything about it; I don’t do it anymore but it helped at the start.”*

*“My kids buy a present still for him on Father’s Day and give them to Grandad (his father). It means the kids can talk about what present they’re buying for Father’s day with other kids at school.”*

*“I was so angry at him for dying and talking about it wasn’t enough. I signed up to do martial arts classes that included boxing. It really helped let out the anger and frustration; I cried through a lot of classes but everyone knew and didn’t mind. I felt calmer after. Exercise has really been the thing for me.”*



*“We have a big BBQ with his mates on his birthday every year; it’s great – we share stories about him. There’s always tears but it’s a happy occasion too with lots of laughs.”*

# A letter from...

*It's never easy to lose someone you love. People pass away due to illness or old age, but we never dream of losing a loved one through a work place tragedy.*

*My name is Kathy, and I suffered such a loss in 2010.*

*It was June 22nd, and my husband Terry who I married in 1984, left for work at 6.10am as he did every morning. At 1:15pm my whole world came crashing down; the police were at the front door of my home. I let them in and was told that there had been a tragic accident at Terry's work, which had taken his life. I was shell-shocked; it really didn't register with me at the time. I didn't believe what I had been told. Terry's boss was with the police as well and they were very sympathetic, especially Terry's boss who (was) heartbroken. They eventually left and I guess it didn't sink in until around 4pm in the afternoon.*

*There were matters I had to attend to, phone calls to family members. I managed to do what I had to over the next few days, ringing the Coroner, solicitors, WorkCover (now SIRA) and arranging the funeral. This was hard to do as I was on my own, but I got through it.*

*Terry was the love of my life, and since his untimely death, my whole life has changed. I have lost interest in doing a lot of things that I used to take pleasure in. I had to give up showing my dogs that Terry and I both loved doing, because I just wasn't in the right frame of mind to continue.*

*Terry worked in a paper manufacturing company. He loved his job and his co-workers, and the family-run business treated Terry like one of their own. They were devastated, and I couldn't thank them enough for the help and support they gave me during my grief. WorkCover had been great as well. They offered me grief counselling which I felt helped a great deal; without their support I don't think that I would have managed.*

*Meeting with other families at the International Day of Mourning in April every year has helped also. I know I am not the only person that this has happened to, so my heart goes out to each and every one of you that have suffered and endured the tragedy of losing someone you love. Every time I hear that there is another workplace tragedy I get upset and think, "Oh no – not another one". I know what their families are going to go through. But just remember – there is always help and support, just like I received.*

*We will never forget our loved ones, but there is a little ray of light at the end of the tunnel, as each year passes, so just try to hang in there. I know it's hard, but I'm trying.*



*Kathy*

## How men, women and children may grieve differently

### Men and women sometimes grieve differently

Both social conditioning and biology influence the way we grieve. For many men, showing feelings may feel like a sign of weakness. Grieving men will often want to do things; sort out practical problems; take on physical tasks; actively seek answers. Providing practical support can provide men with the space to process their feelings, but it may appear to others like they are withdrawing or are in denial.

*Women may be more likely to openly express their feelings and seek support from friends and family. Sharing their grief and talking about their loved one helps to make sense of their loss.*

While these are very broad generalisations and do not reflect everyone's experience, it recognises that men often seek to distance themselves, where women seek closeness and support, which can put a significant strain on relationships. Grieving differently does not mean that one person loved the deceased more than the other; only that their expression of loss is different.

## Young children and grief (1 – 6 years)

It is normal to want to protect children from pain and grief, but it's important for children to learn that it's ok to talk about feelings of loss and sadness.

Children experience the same feelings as adults, but can express it differently. They may even appear to be unaffected by the death, but this does not mean they are not grieving. The behaviours below reflect some of the ways children express their grief. While these are normal reactions, if the behaviours continue, it may be helpful to seek professional advice.

Behaviours may include:

- Being 'clingy' and easily upset
- Playing out the loss with toys
- Anger towards friends, parents, toys
- Copying behaviours of the deceased
- Acting like a younger child or behaving more like an adult
- Not wanting to go to school, problems with school and school work
- Changed eating behaviours
- Disturbed sleep
- Physical symptoms such as stomach pains and headaches
- Asking the same questions repeatedly about the death or the absence of the loved one



Some things you can do to help your children with their grief include:

- Advise the school of the death; talk with the teacher and the school counsellor about support
- Practice with your child what they can say to people who might ask about what happened
- Maintain routines such as meal and bed times, after school activities and play time with friends. This provides a sense of consistency and security
- Include children in planning around special days such as birthdays or special occasions; they may want to make a card, write a letter or draw pictures for the person who has died
- Let them see your grief; it will help them to express their own grief in their own way

### Older children and grief (6-12 years)

Children grieve differently at different ages. Some of the grief reactions that older children may experience include:

- Feeling guilty; that they may have done or said something that caused the death
- Creating stories to fill in gaps in understanding
- Being overly protective of self and others
- Anxiousness about being separated from family
- Attempting to 'parent' the parent and other family members
- Withdrawal and isolation including avoiding school and social activity
- Seeming 'spaced out', including difficulty concentrating at school
- Aggressive behaviour, emotional outbursts
- Regression (behaving like a younger child)
- Disturbed sleep and lethargy

### Pre-adolescent, adolescents and grief (12 – 18 years)

Young adults may experience any of the responses above, as well as:

- Depressed mood
- Rebellious behaviour including reckless risk-taking
- Excessive focus on physical or other activity
- Focus on revenge and punishment towards those who are perceived to have caused the incident, which may include the deceased

Everyone responds to grief differently, and these are just some of the behaviours that are described by families. If you are worried about changes in your child's behaviour, talk with your doctor or counsellor.

## Some days are more difficult than others

### Special dates, places, things:

Significant dates such as birthdays, Christmas, Father's or Mother's Day and anniversaries, including the date that your loved one died can be very difficult. The 'first' of each of those events following the death can be especially painful and it may be helpful to plan ahead with your family or close friends about what to do. You may choose to celebrate or recognise the event in memory of your loved one, or you may choose to keep busy with activities until the day passes. There is no right or wrong way, and how you get through these days will change over time.

### Why it can feel worse a few months after the death:

After the funeral, there may have been a lot of visitors, calls and support, but after some weeks, people return to their lives and the activity dwindles. It is about this time, too, that the shock begins to wear off and the loss becomes painfully real. The intense feelings of loss may feel overwhelming and relentless. This is a normal grief response, and while it may seem impossible, the intensity of these feelings will lessen over time. Talk with caring friends or health professionals who can support you through this.

### How long will I feel like this?

There is no timeline for grief and it may feel like it will never be ok again. These feelings are especially strong for the first 12 to 18 months. Many families describe a change in the intensity of their grief after about two years, and while the loss is still deeply felt, they have begun to learn how to accommodate their feelings into their lives, and are less often overcome by it. Over time, a new 'normal' emerges, one which provides space for your loss, alongside the necessary day to day tasks and routines.



*“The reality is you will grieve forever. You will not ‘get over’ the loss of a loved one; you will heal and you will rebuild yourself around the loss you have suffered. You will be whole again, but you will be never be the same again. Nor should you be the same nor should you want to.”*

*Elizabeth Kubler-Ross*



## getting help: when and where

*It can be difficult to know when to get help in coming to terms with the death of your loved one. Some people will find that the support of family, friends, workmates and community is enough. For others though, when grief feels relentlessly overwhelming, getting professional help might be appropriate.*

Talk with your doctor if you:

- Continue to feel numb and empty some months after the death
- Feel constantly overwhelmed by feelings brought about by the death; guilt, anger, fear, abandonment
- Are not coping with the physical exhaustion, confusion, anxiety, panic or chronic tension that often accompanies grieving
- Work or exercise excessively to avoid thinking about your loss
- Feel like you have no-one to share your grief with
- Are drinking to excess or using drugs to cope
- Are thinking about suicide

Below are some options for accessing support for you and your family; you may have other supports within the community, such as a faith organisation or an interest group that you belong to.



## Counselling and support

### BEYONDBLUE

Information & support about mental health.

Grief & loss information:

[www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/grief-and-loss](http://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts/grief-and-loss)

Phone: 1300 224 636

Hours: 24 hours | 7 days

Online (via website): 3pm – 12am

Suicide call back service: 1300 659 467

[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)



### GRIEFLINE FAMILY & COMMUNITY SERVICES

A dedicated loss and grief telephone counselling service for individuals, families and community groups.

Phone: (03) 9935 7400 or 1300 845 745  
(National – Landline only)

Hours: Midday to 3am | 7 days

[www.griefline.org.au](http://www.griefline.org.au)



### HEADSPACE

Free online and telephone support for people between 12 and 25 years.

Phone: 1800 650 890

[www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)



### KIDS HELP LINE

Phone, WebChat and email counselling for kids or teens.

Phone: 1800 55 1800



### LIFELINE

24 hour crisis support and telephone counselling.

Phone: 13 11 14

Hours: 24 hours | 7 days

[www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)



### MENSLINE

Telephone and online counseling support for men.

Phone: 1300 78 99 78

Hours: 24 hours | 7 days

[www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au)



### NALAG

(National Association for Loss & Grief)

Telephone and face to face grief and loss support.

Phone: 02 9489 6644

[www.nalag.org.au](http://www.nalag.org.au)



### SALVOS (The Salvation Army)

Provide support and assistance including family support and grief counseling and financial assistance.

Phone: 13 72 58

[www.salvos.org.au](http://www.salvos.org.au)





### THE BEREAVEMENT CARE CENTRE

Counseling for adults and children experiencing grief.

Phone: 1300 654 556

[www.berevementcare.com.au](http://www.berevementcare.com.au)



### THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS NSW

A self-help organization offering support to bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents after the death of a child (of any age). Group meetings (30 locations in NSW), peer support, telephone support, online information and resources.

Phone: 02 9290 2355

Toll free: 1800 671 621

[www.thecompassionatefriendsnsw.org.au](http://www.thecompassionatefriendsnsw.org.au)



### SOLACE AUSTRALIA

Support for those grieving the death of their partner. Group meetings (13 locations in NSW), telephone support and information provided by trained grief support workers.

Phone: 02 9519 2820

[www.solace.org.au](http://www.solace.org.au)



Support groups enable people who have been affected by loss to come together to share support and companionship. They can provide understanding and coping strategies and it may help you to feel less isolated by your experience of loss.

### Public and Legal Support

#### icare

Delivers insurance and care services under the NSW Workers Compensation Scheme.

#### icare Workers Insurance

Phone: 13 44 22

Hours: 7am - 7pm | Mon - Fri

[www.icare.nsw.gov.au](http://www.icare.nsw.gov.au)

#### SAFEWORK NSW

Workplace health and safety regulator.

Phone: 13 10 50

Hours: 8:30am - 5pm | Mon - Fri

[www.safework.nsw.gov.au](http://www.safework.nsw.gov.au)

#### STATE INSURANCE REGULATORY AUTHORITY (SIRA)

SIRA is the regulator for the workers compensation insurance scheme and can assist with resolving a dispute regarding a decision made by the insurer.

Phone: 13 10 50

Hours: 8:30am - 5pm | Mon - Fri

[www.sira.nsw.gov.au/workers-compensation](http://www.sira.nsw.gov.au/workers-compensation)



### **CORONER'S COURT OF NSW AND CORONIAL INFORMATION AND SUPPORT PROGRAM (CISP)**

The Coroner may undertake an inquiry or inquest to determine nature and cause of death.

The CISP service provides information regarding coronial processes and referral for counselling.

Phone: 02 8584 7777

Hours: 9am – 4:30pm | Mon – Fri

[www.coroners.justice.nsw.gov.au](http://www.coroners.justice.nsw.gov.au)

### **NSW POLICE**

The police investigate serious workplace incidents, including workplace fatalities.

Phone: 13 14 44

[www.police.nsw.gov.au](http://www.police.nsw.gov.au)

### **THE LAW SOCIETY OF NSW**

Referral service to help to find a solicitor in your area (go to 'For the Community' section).

Phone: 02 9926 0300 or 1800 422 713

Hours: 9am – 5pm | Mon – Fri

[www.lawsociety.com.au](http://www.lawsociety.com.au)

### **LEGAL AID NSW**

Legal aid and advice.

Phone: 1300 888 529

[www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au](http://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au)

### **SERVICE NSW**

- Includes Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages
- Dept of Human Services

Government services for assistance and support

- Registration and certification of deaths in NSW
- Social and health related payments and services
- Social and health related payments and services

Phone: 13 77 88

[www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/dhs/centrelink](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/dhs/centrelink) or

[www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/subjects/what-do-following-death](http://www.humanservices.gov.au/customer/subjects/what-do-following-death)

### **AUSTRALIAN FUNERAL DIRECTORS ASSOCIATION**

To find a funeral director near you.

Phone: 1800 613 913

[www.fdansw.com.au](http://www.fdansw.com.au)



# A letter from...

My name is Ellen and this is my story.

Our beautiful son Timothy, a plasterer, was tragically killed when an excavated trench collapsed at work. From the moment the police knocked on the door that day it was disbelief that this was happening to us. I remember saying to the police; 'Sorry, you have the wrong person'. The shock, confusion, anger and bitterness I felt was so intense that the first week or two were a blur. I felt numb.

As a mother you don't expect to bury your child; it just doesn't seem right. Timothy was killed 6 months before his wedding and his 30th birthday, so instead of arranging a wedding and birthday, we had a funeral to arrange. The day before his funeral I suffered a stroke, so I had even more to deal with.

You learn that everyone's grieving is different and you have to accept that. Don't be afraid to say no to people who tell you how you should feel. Our family and friends were there for us whenever we needed them and my husband was my rock through the grieving process. We talk about Timothy all the time; sometimes a song, a joke, a look reminds us of our beautiful boy who had so much cheekiness and laughter in his life. I often talk to Timothy and ask him what he thinks about things. I have learnt over time that people think they are helping you by not talking about your loved one. In my case it upsets me more if people don't talk about Timothy, as if he was never here.

My way of coping is to keep myself busy. Don't put your life on hold, as that isn't what your loved one would want. I'm not saying that there are not many awful days, when you just cry and think you are never going to feel joy and happiness again, but trust me you will. I once said that grieving consumed my every thought, it sat in the front of my brain 24/7, but as time goes on it has drifted toward the middle, but it never goes away. I must say I dislike immensely the word 'closure', and many people use it. There is never closure – how can you have closure on the person you love so much?

You never forget your loved one and they are never far from your thoughts, but laughter and happiness do come back. We celebrate Timothy's birthday and Christmas with a drink just like he would do if he was still with us. I never dwell on the day Timothy was killed; that is just one day of the 29 years that we had him. A mother's love is so strong that even after you have had your child taken from you it still doesn't break that bond.



Ellen



## **organisations to notify**

*There are a number of people and organisations you may need to notify about the death. It can be distressing to receive letters with your loved one's name on them, such as rates notices, membership renewals and appointment reminders.*

Following is a list of some of the organisations that you might wish to notify. You may choose to contact the organisations yourself, or ask a friend to make contact on your behalf (note that some organisations might request confirmation of the death in writing).



Organisation	Phone number or email address	Date Notified
Accountant		
Australian Electoral Commission	13 23 26	
Australian Tax Office	13 28 61	
Bank/mortgage broker/other financial		
Centrelink	13 23 00	
Child Support Agency	13 12 72	
Club/sporting association		
Dentist		
Doctor/other health providers		
Executor of will		
Insurance companies (home/car/other)		
Medicare	13 20 11	
Optometrist		
Private health fund		
Property manager/landlord		
Schools		
Subscriptions (magazines etc)		
Solicitor		
Superannuation fund		
Vehicle registration/licencing authority		
Utilities (gas/electricity/water)		
Phone service provider (home/mobile/computer)		
Others:		

Notes



## international day of mourning

The International Day of Mourning is a ceremony held on **28 April** each year for families, friends and workers to remember those who have died as a result of a workplace illness or injury.

In Sydney, the ceremony is held at Reflection Park on Darling Harbour, and is attended by several hundred people who lay white lilies in honour of their loved ones and work mates.

For families who are unable to attend, memory cards with messages and photos are placed on the Memory Lines sculpture in dedication.

After the memorial service, lunch is provided for families, and for many, this is the first time they will meet other people who truly understand what they are going through.



You can find out more information about the International Day of Mourning on **icare's** website:

[www.icare.nsw.gov.au](http://www.icare.nsw.gov.au), or you can speak with a person from **icare's** Specialist Support team on: 02 9216 3375.

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