



## HEALTH INFORMATION

# Bereavement and work

**Bereavement is one of the most devastating things any of us will ever go through. For many employers, it can be difficult to know how to respond when an employee is bereaved, and how to ensure that the impact on both the individual and the organisation is minimised.**

**With one in ten people in the UK likely to be affected by bereavement at any one time, employers can benefit from planning ahead.**

Developing a bereavement policy, training managers and HR staff, and having access to on-site bereavement support can all help an organisation offer a confident, compassionate response when the worst happens.

## Why support bereaved employees?

At any time, one in ten people in the UK is likely to be affected by a bereavement. While many bereaved employees cope reasonably well at work, others struggle to manage their loss, and this can impact on their work and their relationships with managers and colleagues. A well planned and managed approach to bereavement at work not only helps bereaved employees to cope better with their loss but also:-

- Supports their return to productivity.
- Can help reduce absenteeism and sick leave.
- Helps avoid unnecessary staff turnover.
- Addresses the impact on colleagues and co-workers.
- Strengthens corporate culture and team morale.

## My employee has been bereaved - what should I do?

### Do

- Take time and check that the bereaved employee is coping with returning to work and be prepared for flexibility with hours of work and tasks performed.

- Organise a 'buddy' system perhaps with one designated co-worker available to listen if the bereaved employee is having a difficult day.
- Give the bereaved employee a place of safety if they wish to have a quiet moment and if things become too much for them.
- Be sensitive to anniversaries and special days for the bereaved.
- Acknowledge that grief may communicate through anger and mood swings in the bereaved employee.
- Provide training for your staff in Bereavement in the workplace so your company is prepared.
- Recognise that other co-workers may also be affected and need support as well.
- Signpost the bereaved employee if necessary and provide information, leaflets and contacts to outside agencies that may help them, or assistance within the workplace such as Counselling or EAPs.

### Don't

- Ignore the situation
- Make the assumption that just because they are back at work they are 'over' it and 'back to normal'
- Make light of the bereavement and use clichéd terms e.g. 'I know just how you're feeling.' 'Time will heal.'
- Change the subject if the bereaved colleague wants to talk about their loss
- Make insensitive remarks or minimise their loss
- Apply pressure to get on with work that isn't essential
- Put unrealistic time frames on your support for them

## Further Information

[www.cruse.org.uk/cruse-areas-and-branches](http://www.cruse.org.uk/cruse-areas-and-branches)

[www.tcf.org.uk](http://www.tcf.org.uk)

[www.acas.org.uk/bereavement](http://www.acas.org.uk/bereavement)

[www.medigold-health.com](http://www.medigold-health.com)

Provided by Medigold Health Consultancy Ltd. All content is provided for general information only, and should not be treated as a substitute for the medical advice of your own GP or any other health care professional. No responsibility or liability for any diagnosis made by the reader based on the content of this information sheet is taken. This information does not endorse any commercial product or service mentioned. Always consult your own GP if you're in any way concerned about your health.



MEDIGOLD  
HEALTH

10/2018