

## Dealing with Death and Grief

Always, for all of us, the death of someone close is an event of great significance and long-lasting impact. Our lives change sharply or subtly, and for a time our thoughts and feelings are confused.

No two of us react in quite the same way, so it is not surprising if we feel alone and isolated in our grief. Our emotions may be volatile, and our feelings contradictory. Grief may bring great sadness at the loss of someone central (or peripheral) to our lives. Perhaps we are angry- rationally or not - that someone whom we cared for has 'left us'. We may feel guilty that somehow we did not 'do all that we might have'. Conversely, we may feel relief that the individual is at last at peace and finally free of suffering.

We may push the situation from our minds and appear to be untroubled. Or perhaps it will be hard to put the death out of our minds. Our appetite may be affected. We may sleep more or less than we used to. The fact that every member of the human race must face the death of individuals close to them and go through similar situations does not seem to reduce our pain.

Our good friends may be confused and unsure how to respond. Should they go on as though nothing has changed, or should they be solicitous of our needs? And how should we in turn respond to these various overtures and reactions? Is there a "right way" to mourn?

The world does not wait for us to adjust. Many details call out for attention - some of great importance - even as ordinary, day-to-day routines persist. Fortunately, no one at Middlebury College has to face these difficult times alone. Many individuals with experience and training are ready to help those who are grieving.

Middlebury College Counseling, has counselors and therapists available to discuss immediate and longer lasting issues during regular business hours. For After Hours Counseling (from 5PM until 8:15AM) call 802-443-5141 and dial 1 when prompted by voicemail greeting. Referrals are also available to community resources. It is important to remember that not all reactions to loss are immediate and that reactions do not always seem clearly connected to a particular loss.

### Other Campus Resources:

The Scott Center is a resource for students who want pastoral care and counseling. We also encourage any student who has experienced grief and loss to meet with your Commons Dean, and/or Commons Residential Director. Sometimes a student will miss classes or be unable to complete work as scheduled. The Commons Deans and CRDs are able to offer support, consult with faculty members, and assist with short- and long-term academic support.

For faculty and staff, the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) provides confidential counseling and referral services for employees. To access their comprehensive web site, with many tools and articles, go to the [e4health web site](http://e4health.com) (helloe4.com). Username: middlebury college; Password: guest; Or call them at: 800-828-6025 (24/7).

Middlebury College Counseling

Parton Center for Health and Wellness

Adapted from AUCCCD and CAPS Brown University resources