



Dealing With Death at Work

When a coworker dies—whether from accident, illness or violence—those closest to the coworker may find it hard to be on the job, doing the work they had formerly shared with the deceased coworker. Less recognized is the fact that even those who didn't work directly with the employee

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may also grieve. If you're recovering from the death of a coworker—whether the coworker was a close friend or a casual hallway acquaintance—keep these points in mind:

Business as Usual? Not Yet

Expect that your work will be affected in some way by the event. You may not work as efficiently or get as much done for a while. Perhaps you'll

need some time on the job to get in touch with your feelings of loss. You may feel a mix of sorrow, guilt, anger and denial. Working through these feelings eventually leads to acceptance and peace of mind. Ignoring them is a prescription for anxiety and depression.

Keep in Touch

Others are feeling the way you feel. Communicating your feelings can be a great relief both to you and to others. Talk about your sense of loss, and share memories and stories about the departed. Praise, criticism and laughter at the deceased's foibles or antics are all healthy. Allow yourself—and others—to cry or be angry. Some people may need to share their feeling that if they had just done something differently, the departed would be alive today. Be there both to participate and to listen.

What You Can Do

You can take action to help yourself and others recover

from a recent death. Many companies offer counseling and group recovery programs.

Ask your employee assistance program for information on what help is available. If the death was job-related, do what you can to make the workplace safer, so that such deaths can be prevented in the future.

Allow yourself—and others—to cry or be angry.

Healing takes time. But if the months go by and you can't shake the feeling of sorrow, reach out for help. Talk to a counselor or pastor, ask your doctor where to get help, or look for a referral service in the community services pages of your telephone book. Though it may seem hard to take this step right now, the rewards of once again feeling whole are well worth the effort.