

Teach me to say goodbye

Mourning my partner's death

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If your partner has died

Mourning the death of a spouse takes a time defined only by the circumstances of each case, each person's personal characteristics and the degree of family and social support available.



Letting out and expressing feelings every day, to yourself and your children, as well as sharing the pain and accepting the support of other people, will facilitate the journey through the grieving process alone.

Talk about him or her. Even though it is painful, it will be healing and his or her memory will be integrated naturally within you. Continue to carry out the activities you did together, experiencing them in another way. In time, new emotions will work way their way through and you will start to enjoy each activity you undertake.



Whilst mourning, we are more susceptible to suffering illnesses. Care must be taken in routines for taking medication, food, hydration, rest and sports/leisure.

During the time when grief is experienced intensely, it is most advisable, whenever possible, to postpone important decisions, and it is most appropriate to let time pass until you are calmer and clearer.



It is important to request support and advice when conducting legal procedures related to the situation of widow and widowerhood (e.g. pension request), thus reducing the level of stress that these procedures can generate.



My partner has died

When a partner or spouse dies, the prevailing feeling is that of fragility and vulnerability.



Regardless of whether the death was unexpected or occurred after a period of illness, it is a time when it is difficult to envisage a future due to **the fact** that the figure that has accompanied us will no longer be present in our life.

Frequently, those who have just lost their partner experience these feelings of confusion and grief for a long time, especially in each circumstance they shared.

The mourning will have to pass through gradually **accommodating and reconstructing** a new place in the world without that person, while simultaneously reorganising priorities such as caring for children or going back to work.

Importance of the farewell: what remained to be said.

Saying goodbye to our partner will be very important: before his or her death (if the opportunity for a shared farewell is available), and especially in cases where it has not been possible.

↪ **Saying goodbye** is a tribute to the person we love and who loved us, and in our farewell, we must allow ourselves (and allow the other person) to give free rein to the emotions and thoughts that come to us without shame or guilt.

↪ **Words never spoken**, if expressed from respect (said or written in a letter), are healing.

The death of a loved one leads to bereavement in which the love will remain present in our everyday life, but in a different way. A new life without the loved one. A new dawn after the dark night of the soul of loss.



Why do I feel guilty?

If you experience guilt in the event of death, just like you would do with any other emotion, you have to stop to listen to what it is saying to you. Thoughts can arise like *"if I had done things differently, maybe I could have avoided it..."* or *"maybe it was best to stop the suffering..."* which can make us feel even worse, but which, under no circumstances, will make us responsible for the situation that has occurred.



Guilt is nourished by our state of mental block and vulnerability, postponing the emergence of other emotions that will come sooner or later, such as **intense sadness or anger**. Guilt, as an emotion, also has a goal: **realigning our value and belief system with our emotional world**, which will gradually become balanced as guilt as a defence gradually fades away.

For this reason, it is essential to understand that having certain thoughts or feelings of guilt is "normal" within a grieving process, in which feelings will evolve towards normalisation and acceptance of the loss.



How can you tell a child about the death of their parent?



The ideal person to give them this information is the living parent, or someone very close to the child, always from affection and respect, through a **short and concise message** that is adapted to suit their level of understanding and seeking to include the word **death**, since it is directly linked to the idea of **irreversibility**.

It will also be important to allow the child to participate in the farewell rituals with the adult, with the child symbolically bonding with the deceased, for instance, through a drawing.



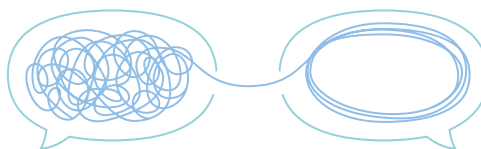
Fears in a child's mourning:

In the event of death of a parent (father/mother), a child may experience natural fears and circular interpretations that the adult must address directly*, without attempting to ignore them or trivialise them:

1. **CAUSALITY:** Did I cause the death?
2. **UNCERTAINTY:** Will this happen to me?
3. **FUTURE:** And now, who is going to take care of me?



Children from 5 years of age associate the concept of irreversibility with a definitive and permanent circumstance. These are necessary realities to begin the process of mourning.



**The support of a child psychologist who is an expert in mourning is recommended in cases of children/adolescents who have lost their father/mother, as well as informing the school's management and teaching staff of the matter.*