

RETURNING TO THE WORK PLACE

BE EASY ON YOURSELF

Expect that you may feel more distracted or less productive than before your loss. Realize your mind or reflexes may not respond as quickly in the beginning.

TAKE TIME OUT TO GRIEVE

Try to set time aside during the day or create ways to remember your loved one. Let people know if you need moments of more privacy or need a place to cry or compose yourself while at work.

CONSIDER HOW MUCH YOU WANT TO SHARE WITH OTHERS

For some people, sharing some of their grief and sorrow with their coworkers helps them cope; while for others, seeking other avenues for solace and comfort works best for them. If you choose to share some of your grief with coworkers, select those with whom you feel the most comfortable, and who appear to be open to listening to you.

When you are grieving, it can also be difficult to gauge when or how much to share with people. Don't hesitate to ask your coworkers about their readiness or availability to listen ("Is it okay that I'm sharing this with you right now?" or "Please tell me if this is too much."). Be aware that if your feelings are particularly intense or emotional, or you seem to require a lot of attention, some coworkers may appear uncomfortable with your sharing. This may mean you need to find sources outside of work to express your sadness.

BE UNDERSTANDING WITH COWORKERS

You may find coworkers awkward or unsure how to interact with you shortly after the death. Many coworkers are well-meaning and want to be supportive, but may feel uncertain how to approach you or may feel afraid of what to say (so they either say the "wrong thing" or say nothing at all). Let people know what level of interaction you'd like ("It's okay for you to ask how I'm doing. . ." or "I'd rather not discuss this right now; I'll let you know when I can. . ."). Respect people's limits of being able to attend to your loss while continuing to carry on with their work.

KEEP YOUR MANAGER/SUPERVISOR/DEPARTMENT HEAD INFORMED

If you have difficulty adjusting to being back at work (feel fatigued, overwhelmed, unfocused, etc.), let your manager/supervisor/department head know. Perhaps he or she can help you with your work transition: e.g., temporarily adjust your work hours or schedule, shift project priorities, reduce your workload. Consider ways your manager/supervisor/department head can be an additional source of support at work.