

# Dealing with Death at Work

## Business as usual? Maybe!

People process grief and loss differently. Some may be comfortable diving right back into work while others need recovery time to deal with the associated feelings. There is no right or wrong, just what works best for you.

Either way you'll need some time to get in touch with feelings that may range from sorrow, through guilt, anger and denial. Working through these feelings usually leads to acceptance and peace. Ignoring them is a prescription for depression, anxiety and more.



**W**hen a coworker dies – whether from accident, illness or violence – not only is the immediate workplace affected, but also others who have had regular and even occasional contact. Those closest to the coworker may find it hard to work. Less recognized is the fact that even those who didn't work directly with the employee may also grieve. A workplace recovering from the death of a coworker – whether the coworker was a close friend or casual hallway acquaintance – should keep these points in mind:

### Communicate - Keep in Touch

Everyone may be touched by this death. Be honest with what you are feeling. Communicate those feelings freely and openly to coworkers, which facilitates the beginning of a healthy grieving process. 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 share their feeling that they could have done something differently, that would have kept the departed alive. Be there both to participate and to listen, but understand that blaming oneself is rarely warranted or accurate.

### What You Can Do

You can take action to help yourself and others recover from a recent loss. 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, the workplace should invest in strategies to make the workplace safer, which may prevent such deaths in the future.

Healing takes time, but facilitated by reaching out to talk to those in your support system, both at work and at home. If after several weeks you find yourself locked in grief, please seek a professional counselor. That step may seem hard to take but if it is needed, the rewards of once again feeling whole are well worth the effort.



**For confidential help call 1-888-321-4433**