

# *Grief at Work*

## SUPPORTING PEOPLE EXPERIENCING LOSS



How supporting grievers builds  
employee retention and  
engagement and customer loyalty

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## Why learn about supporting griever?

In 2022 "quiet quitting" was the phrase of the year. Businesses are still struggling to hire and retain employees because what people are prepared to do for work has changed. Workers aren't lazy. They want to feel respected and valued and not exploited.



### Important Note

**According to one Gallup survey 50% of employees left their job because of their manager. Upleveling your empathy skills will build connection and loyalty.**

At the same time, grief is all around us and grieverers are in our workplaces as staff and customers. Learning the skills, tools and mindsets to support them builds our empathy muscle and increases overall employee retention and customer loyalty.

The best workplaces are the ones where employees feel seen, heard and valued and customers feel important and connected. The way we provide support for people experiencing loss sets the stage for all that to happen.

If you have a policy for accommodating staff with physical limitations you should have one for people who are grieving. And everyone should know what it is. Not sure where to start? Keep reading.

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# What does grief look like at work?

There is a wide range of ways griever show up at work. For some, work is a respite and they hold it together while they are there and go home to grieve. For others, they need space to openly grieve at work. Others fall somewhere between those.

## Important Note

**Brain fog has the biggest impact at work. It makes it hard to concentrate, do sequential tasks and manage time. It can last much longer than we expect.**



Here are some things that can happen in grief we don't talk about:

- sleep disruption and exhaustion
- physical pain, tingling, strength loss
- changes in relationships
- difficulty making light conversation
- difficulty tracking steps and deadlines in projects
- trouble following multi step directions
- memory lapses

Any of these can show up at work. How we support someone allows them to be successful within their changing limitations lets them continue as an important part of our team and encourages them to stay.

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## Quick Protocols to put into place today:

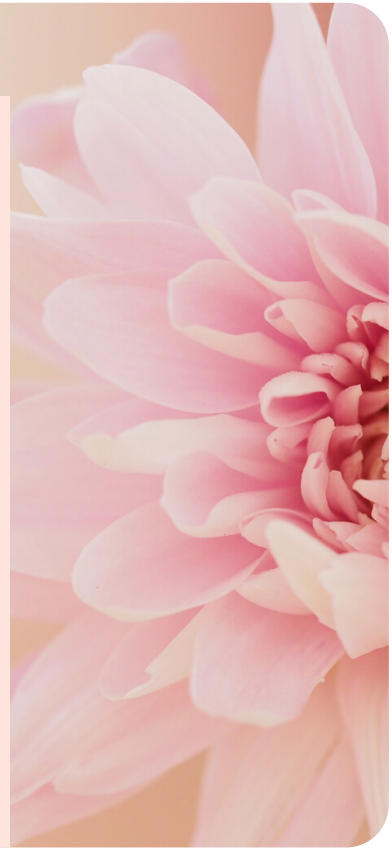
1. Adjusted work load. Talk to the griever about what they can handle and what they can't. Set a time to review.
2. Adjusted work hours. For many grievors, time is hard to manage. Flexible work hours and task oriented deliverables help.
3. A place to grieve. Many employees appreciate holding it together at work as a respite. When they can't, a private place to go helps. Especially if they are client facing.

**Offering condolences, a few days off and an EAP is a great start but people experiencing loss need ongoing support to be successful at work. The way you accommodate them shows all employees that you care about them and their mental health.**

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## Important Tip

**Not sure if they're grieving? Some employees may not be comfortable telling you what's happening especially around this taboo topic. If you notice a change in their work quality, attention span or attendance patterns they may be experiencing loss.**



## How to address grief and loss at work?

Grief and loss will happen to all of us with a variety of losses throughout our lives. Right now, coming out of Covid, we are all experiencing loss. Many people lost loved ones. Some lost jobs and businesses. We lost events, vacations, gatherings and our sense of normalcy. What would happen if you normalized that at work?

Take a team building meeting and bring it up. Acknowledge that it's awkward and we don't know what to say and that is okay. Brainstorm with your team how they are feeling and what they need. Make it ok to be messy and awkward when we talk about grief. And make it ok that we talk about it.

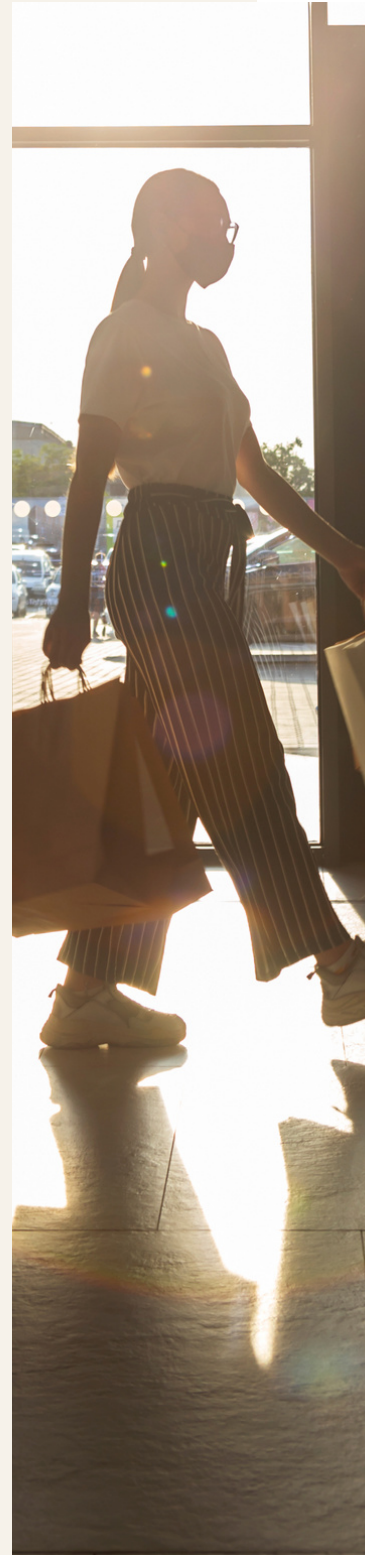
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## Increase Customer Loyalty

1. Make transactional conversations transactional. Asking a griever how they are is challenging for them as is wishing them a great day. Consider "Did you find what you were looking for?" and "Thank you for coming".

2. If you have a long term relationship with them offer ongoing support. Appointment reminders and deadline confirmations help with managing time. Giving instructions and agreements in writing helps with brain fog.

3. Sensing when someone is struggling is key. Asking if they are ok can help. If they say they are but clearly aren't don't keep asking. They may not want to share. If you are concerned it's something you are doing ask that specifically.



## Conclusion and Next Steps

Learning to support people experiencing grief and loss helps us build empathy and emotional intelligence. That's the leadership teams people want to work for.

Having clear, flexible protocols and policies that everyone knows about make it ok to be human at work.

These are not innate qualities but instead are skills, tools and mindsets that can be learned and strengthened.

Contact Suzanne to find out more about how her 8 step process can work for you and your team.



Suzanne is a Certified Grief Educator, Transformational Coach and Facilitator and grieving mom. Opening space for grief at work and all around us is her expertise and passion.

*Thank you!*

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