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Compassion & inclusion

Identity & inclusion: Your experience matters

People experience grief and caring differently, shaped by their relationships, culture, identity, family structures, neurodivergence, and personal circumstances, to name a few. Sometimes it can feel hard knowing how to approach these conversations at work, and what you can ask for, this guide includes prompts to help you begin.

There are many types of support you may need

TIME

Time away from work or flexibility around your hours.

FLEXIBILITY

Changes to where, when or how you work.

SPACE

Adjustments to meetings, workload, communication or responsibilities.

UNDERSTANDING

A manager who recognises that you may not be able to work exactly as you normally would.

CHECK-INS

Ongoing support rather than a one-off conversation.

Conversation starters for employees

I'm finding busy environments overwhelming at the moment. Could we look at whether there are quieter spaces or alternative ways for me to work?

This situation is also affecting my existing needs. Could we discuss what adjustments might help me at work?

There are cultural/family commitments I need to observe following this loss. Can we discuss how we can accommodate these?

I may need a little longer to process information and respond to things while I'm dealing with this.

I'd like to talk about my particular circumstances within my family/friend group/community without assumptions being made.

There are religious/faith related responsibilities I need to observe. Can we discuss how these could be accommodated?



For line managers and employers

An inclusive workplace recognises that people bring their relationships, responsibilities, identities, grief and experiences with them to work, and creates the conditions for people to be human.

What does compassionate and inclusive support look like?

ASK, DON'T ASSUME

There is no single way to experience or express grief, and cultural or faith practices may shape how someone mourns. Rather than assuming what someone needs, ask: "What would be helpful for you right now?" Keep the conversation going in the months after.

RECOGNISE DIFFERENT FAMILY STRUCTURES

The person someone is grieving or caring for may not fit a traditional definition of family. Ask: "Do our policies leave room for different relationships and family structures?"

LOOK BEYOND THE POLICY

Consider how everyday management, communication, flexibility and workplace culture support people when life becomes difficult. Recognise that intersectional experiences can shape what support someone needs. Ask, "Would our culture support someone with different lived experiences?"

MAKE FLEXIBILITY POSSIBLE

People may need different adjustments, and their requirements can change over time. Recognise individual circumstances and unique needs. Consider: flexible hours, workload adjustments, remote working, time away, check-ins or a phased return (if you can make it happen).

Compassionate Employers is the UK's only workplace wellbeing programme exclusively focused on serious illness, caring and grief.

We can provide your organisation with the skills, knowledge and resources to support your employees through life's toughest moments.

**To find out more email us at
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