



Top 10 Tips for Supporting Bereaved Students

Follow established effective practice in supporting your students. Act in accordance with the [UKAT Core Values of Personal Tutoring and Academic Advising](#), follow the competencies articulated in the [UKAT Professional Framework for Academic Advising](#) and Personal Tutoring, and make use of resources available to personal tutors through UKAT (<https://www.ukat.ac.uk>).

1 GRIEF IS DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE

Grief takes many forms; there is no right or wrong way to grieve. Students experience a range of emotions, physical symptoms, behavioural responses, and practical and financial changes.

6 PROVIDE PRACTICAL SUPPORT

Grief can make everyday tasks harder, including navigating appointments and paperwork. Offer concrete help when possible e.g. ask “shall we fill in the form together?”, “can I email X for you?”, or “do you want me to send a list of grief resources?”

2 GRIEF CAN IMPACT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Bereaved students may struggle with concentration, information processing, memory, and maintaining daily routines, all of which can affect their studies.

7 SIGNPOST TO OTHER RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONS

Link students to university and [other support services, helpful websites, books and podcasts](#). You don't have to know every option, just point them in the right direction. Some may need emotional support, others may need practical help.

3 SAYING SOMETHING IS BETTER THAN SAYING NOTHING

Often we're worried about getting it wrong. There is no perfect response, but a sensitive acknowledgement, such as sharing a few kind words in an email, can help students feel seen.

8 SEEK ADVICE IF YOU NEED TO

If you're not sure how to help, or are concerned about a student's welfare, speak to a manager or trusted colleague. You can also check out the Winston's Wish [advice helpline](#).

4 OFFER OPPORTUNITIES TO TALK, BUT DON'T FORCE IT

Consider when/where this would feel comfortable. Avoid assumptions and ask open questions - e.g. “how have you been finding coming back to university?” instead of “this must be awful”. Don't force it – some students may prefer privacy.

9 GRIEF DOESN'T DISAPPEAR

Bereaved students may struggle for months and years after a death, especially around anniversaries or stressful exam periods. Continue gently checking in. Put a reminder in your calendar for significant date is coming up.

5 GET COMFORTABLE WITH DIFFICULT EMOTIONS

Try not to pressure students to 'be strong'. Grief can be messy and feeling feelings is an important part of processing. You may want to share [tips for managing grief](#).

10 LOOK AFTER YOURSELF AS A SUPPORTER

Supporting someone who is grieving can be emotionally demanding, and might bring up your own memories and feelings. Take some time to reflect, and remember to be kind to yourself.