

PREPARED FOR

Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

Grief in the Workplace – An Advanced HR Guide

Policies, Processes, and Practices for Bereaved Employees

Presented by Dr. Priya Dubey Sharma

Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

UDYAM-MP-10-0120839



मनस् – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

Programme Overview

This programme offers a comprehensive upgrade to outdated and psychologically uninformed bereavement policies prevalent in India. It provides HR professionals and managers with the knowledge and tools to support employees through loss with empathy and effectiveness.

Learning Objectives

- ✔ Understand the diverse ways employees experience grief and the varied durations these emotions can manifest, enabling a more compassionate and flexible approach to support.
- ✔ Redesign bereavement leave policies to extend beyond the traditional three days, acknowledging the profound impact of loss and accommodating the diverse needs of employees.
- ✔ Develop strategies for a phased return to work post-bereavement, ensuring employees can reintegrate gradually and sustainably without undue pressure.
- ✔ Identify signs of complicated grief and understand when standard support mechanisms may be insufficient, ensuring timely referral to specialized assistance.
- ✔ Learn to support entire teams when a colleague passes away, recognizing and addressing the collective impact of loss on workplace dynamics and morale.
- ✔ Integrate an understanding of Indian cultural mourning customs into workplace support, creating a more sensitive and relevant framework for employees.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

This programme is designed for Chief Human Resources Officers, HR Directors, and all managers who play a crucial role in employee support and policy implementation.

Programme Content

1. Understanding the Spectrum of Grief and Its Duration

Employees experience grief in multifaceted ways, ranging from acute sorrow to prolonged adjustment periods. This section will explore common grief responses, including denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance, and discuss how individual factors and cultural contexts can influence the duration and intensity of these feelings. Recognizing that grief is not linear is crucial for providing appropriate support. We will examine how a rigid, time-bound approach to mourning can exacerbate distress and hinder an employee's ability to cope.

 **Activity: Group discussion on personal observations of grief in the workplace.**

2. Reimagining Bereavement Leave Policies

Traditional three-day bereavement leave often falls short of adequately supporting employees through significant loss. This session will guide participants in redesigning leave policies to be more inclusive and empathetic, considering different types of relationships and the profound emotional toll of bereavement. We will explore flexible leave options, including extending paid leave and offering unpaid leave, to accommodate the varying needs associated with mourning rituals and emotional recovery. The aim is to create policies that honor the employee's experience rather than imposing arbitrary limitations.

 **Activity: Brainstorming flexible leave policy components.**

3. Facilitating a Phased Return to Work

Returning to the workplace after a period of bereavement can be overwhelming. This section focuses on developing a phased return-to-work strategy, allowing employees to gradually reintegrate into their roles and responsibilities. We will discuss practical approaches such as reduced hours, modified duties, and flexible work arrangements during the initial return period. The goal is to provide a supportive transition that acknowledges the employee's ongoing emotional journey while ensuring a sustainable return to productivity.

 **Activity: Developing sample phased return-to-work plans.**

4. Addressing Complicated Grief in the Workplace

While most individuals navigate grief with time and support, some may experience complicated grief, characterized by prolonged and intense sorrow that interferes with daily functioning. This module will equip HR professionals and managers to recognize potential signs of complicated grief, such as persistent disbelief, intrusive thoughts, or significant functional impairment. We will discuss the importance of early identification and the process of referring employees to specialized mental wellness professionals for targeted interventions.

 **Activity: Case study analysis of complicated grief scenarios.**

5. Supporting Teams Through Collective Loss

The death of a colleague impacts the entire team, creating a shared sense of loss, disruption, and potential anxiety. This section will provide strategies for supporting teams through such challenging times, including facilitating open communication, acknowledging the collective grief, and fostering a supportive team environment. We will explore how managers can lead discussions about the loss, honor the memory of the deceased, and help the team navigate the adjustment period together.

 **Activity: Role-playing team support conversations.**

6. Integrating Indian Cultural Mourning Practices

Understanding and respecting Indian cultural mourning customs, such as the 13-day period, observance of Shraddh, and annual anniversary rituals, is vital for providing culturally sensitive support. This module will delve into these practices, helping participants understand their significance and how they may influence an employee's need for time and space. The objective is to align workplace policies and support systems with cultural expectations, demonstrating genuine care and respect for employees' traditions and beliefs during times of loss.

 **Activity: Discussion on culturally sensitive communication during mourning periods.**

Action Plan

Concrete steps for implementation.

Action	Owner	Timeline	Notes
Review and update existing bereavement leave policy.	HR/Manager	Week 1	Extend minimum paid leave to 5 days, with provisions for additional paid or unpaid leave based on relationship and circumstances.
Develop guidelines for phased return-to-work plans.	HR	Month 1	Include options for reduced hours, flexible schedules, and temporary duty modifications.
Create a resource list for mental wellness support.	Manager	Week 2	Compile contact information for internal EAP (if available) and external grief counselors.
Train managers on recognizing and responding to complicated grief.	HR	Month 1	Focus on early identification and appropriate referral pathways.
Communicate updated policies and support resources to all employees.	HR/Manager	Month 2	Utilize multiple channels: email, intranet, and team meetings.
Incorporate cultural mourning practices into HR support protocols.	Leadership	Quarter 1	Ensure managers are aware of and sensitive to common Indian mourning customs.

About Manas



Dr. Priya Dubey Sharma

Founder & Consulting Psychologist | Applied, Organizational & Behavioural Psychologist | PhD | 18+ Years

Dr. Priya Dubey Sharma brings 18+ years of applied psychology to corporate wellness. She has worked with SBI, educational institutions, and corporate teams across India. Her evidence-based approach combines CBT, mindfulness, and culturally contextualised psychology for measurable outcomes. She is the creator of the Performance FOMO Index™ and the High-Functioning Distress Framework™.

Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

A MSME-registered organisation dedicated to evidence-based mental wellness.

UDYAM-MP-10-0120839

Ready to Partner With Us?



Website

manas365.com



Corporate Enquiries

manu@manas365.com



WhatsApp

[+91 99818 13224](https://wa.me/919981813224)



Book a Meeting

manas365.com/book-session

Disclaimer: This resource has been prepared by Dr. Priya Dubey Sharma — Founder & Consulting Psychologist (Applied, Organizational & Behavioural Psychologist, PhD, 18+ years), Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling. This is a wellness education and self-help resource for educational purposes only. It does not constitute a clinical diagnosis, clinical assessment, or treatment recommendation for any mental health condition, and has no relevance or admissibility in any court of law, legal proceeding, or official dispute resolution process. It is not a substitute for professional psychological, medical, or legal advice. For personalised support, reach out to the Manas Team for guidance, or consult a qualified Psychiatrist or licensed mental health professional. © 2026 Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling. All rights reserved. For queries: priya@manas365.com | +91 99818 13224

Corporate Programme Disclaimer: This document has been prepared by Dr. Priya Dubey Sharma — Founder & Consulting Psychologist (Applied, Organizational & Behavioural Psychologist, PhD, 18+ years), Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling (UDYAM-MP-10-0120839). Content is for programme overview and educational purposes only. Nothing herein constitutes legal advice regarding POSH Act compliance — organisations should consult qualified legal counsel for specific legal guidance. For clinical or psychological support, please reach out to the Manas Team for personalised guidance, or consult a qualified Psychiatrist or licensed mental health professional. © 2026 Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling. All rights reserved. Confidential — prepared specifically for the named organisation. For queries: manu@manas365.com | +91 99818 13224 This document does not constitute a legal instrument and carries no legal standing or admissibility in any court of law or official proceeding.