



REAL MEN CRY TOO: GRIEF, HEALING, AND MENTAL HEALTH FOR MEN

BY SERENITY CORPORATE WELLNESS

In many cultures, the image of the strong, silent man still holds immense power. From childhood, many boys are told, “indoda ayikhali” – a man doesn’t cry. But what happens when tragedy strikes? When you lose a parent, a brother, a friend, a child? What happens when the grief weighs so heavily on your chest that even breathing feels like a battle?

Too many men are silently carrying the weight of loss, convinced that seeking help is a sign of weakness. But here’s the truth: asking for support is one of the bravest things a man can do.

GRIEF WEARS MANY FACES

Grief isn’t just about crying. It can look like anger. It can feel like numbness. It can manifest in sleepless nights, sudden outbursts, heavy drinking, or withdrawing from loved ones. Men often grieve in silence, and that silence can be deadly.

“Men are socialised to ‘be strong’, to hold things together for the family, the community, the team,” says Dr. Tshepo Mahlangu, a Johannesburg-based clinical psychologist interviewed by Serenity Corporate Wellness. “But grief is not something we can muscle our way through. It needs to be felt, processed, and acknowledged.”



THE HIDDEN TOLL OF UNPROCESSED GRIEF

Untreated grief can lead to long-term mental and physical health problems. It can strain relationships, impact job performance, and even lead to substance abuse or depression. Yet many men choose to push through, to keep going, to pretend they are fine.



Dr. Mahlangu warns, “When grief is buried alive, it comes back in other forms – anxiety, rage, illness. The body remembers what the mind tries to forget.”

5 WAYS MEN CAN COPE WITH GRIEF

If you or someone you know is grieving, here are ways to start healing – without betraying your masculinity:

1. Acknowledge Your Loss

It’s okay to admit you’re not okay. Naming the pain is the first step toward healing. Write it down, say it out loud, or talk about it with someone you trust.

2. Find Your Language for Grief

You might not be a talker – and that’s okay. Some men process grief through movement (exercise, running, walking), others through music, journaling, or prayer. Find your outlet.

3. Create a Ritual

Light a candle on special days, visit the grave, or cook your loved one’s favourite meal. Rituals give structure to grief and create space for remembrance.

4. Connect – Even Quietly

Support doesn’t always mean sitting in a circle and talking about feelings. It could be meeting a friend for a game of soccer or fishing. Shared presence can be healing.

5. Seek Professional Help – Yes, You.

Therapy is not a sign of weakness. It’s a tool. Just like you’d go to a mechanic for your car, you can see a mental health professional to help process emotional pain. EAP services like ours at Serenity are designed to make this support accessible and confidential.

A NOTE TO THE BROTHERS HOLDING IT IN

You don’t have to carry grief alone.

As Dr. Mahlangu puts it, “Grief is the price we pay for love. If we loved deeply, we will grieve deeply. But that pain doesn’t make you less of a man. It makes you human.”

So, to the men out there battling quiet storms: real men cry. Real men ask for help. Real men heal.

Let’s rewrite the story of what strength looks like – one conversation, one hug, one tear at a time. Need someone to talk to?

Serenity Corporate Wellness offers confidential counselling through our Employee Assistance Programme.

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REACH OUT.

WE ARE HERE TO WALK WITH YOU.



*For People Who Matter **By People Who Care.***

The journey to self-awareness and emotional resilience begins with a single step.

At Serenity Corporate Wellness, we provide expert counselling services designed to help individuals and organizations cultivate healthier, more productive environments. Whether you're facing personal challenges or seeking to build a stronger workplace culture, our tailored support ensures you never have to navigate these struggles alone. Take the first step toward unlocking your full potential — to learn more visit: www.serenitycorporatewellness.com