

Dealing with expectations

One of the things that people have told us that is hard to deal with in grieving is other people's expectations of how you should or shouldn't be grieving. For example, one person told us that he likes to visit his wife's grave almost every day. It's not an inconvenience for him and he finds it comforting. And still, he has had a comment from a friend suggesting that he shouldn't do this, or he will never 'move on'.

Similarly, we can also have expectations **ourselves** of how things should be happening, what we should and shouldn't be doing. If you are finding that other people's ideas about how you should be doing things, or if your own expectations are causing you difficulty, this worksheet uses your open and engaged skills to deal with that. Read the prompt questions below, think about each one and write your answers in the boxes provided.

What happened, or what leads you to feel that there is an expectation on you?

What is the expectation – write about it as clearly as you can?

Where is this coming from – is it from a specific someone else, is it from your own mind, or is it a general sense from other people?

If the expectation is coming from a specific person you know:

Try to think about what might be behind this sentiment from them? Is it possible that they feel uncomfortable and are reacting to that? Is it that they care for you and think that they are trying to help you? Write here your responses to these suggested questions.

If the expectation is coming from you or from a general sense:

Notice how your advisor mind has given you a bit of advice here: you should... or you shouldn't.... If you follow this advice, where does it lead? Would I be willing to not follow this rule? Where would that lead me?

Having taken these different perspectives, think about what kind of person you want to be in responding to the other people involved. What values will guide how you speak to them about their expectations and the impact that they have on you? Write here ways that you could respond to either the people who have these expectations, or to yourself about your own expectations?

Are there obstacles to taking the steps that you wrote about? If so – write here what might get in the way and how you could deal with any obstacles, using OPEN, AWARE and ENGAGED skills.