



Common Responses to Loss

Time moves forward. The grieving process has its own timeline. Each of us is unique.

“Grief is not a sign of weakness, but the result of loss and finding your way.”

Shock, Numbness, and Disbelief

There is a sense of disbelief. One hopes it is just a bad dream. Numbness is nature's way of “cushioning” us until we can face the emotions of grief.

Anger

We may look for somebody to blame or ask ourselves “Why.” Anger can be directed at ourselves, others, God, the one who died, or those who provided care.

Relief

Sometimes relief is accompanied by guilt. It is a common emotion after the death of someone who endured a long-term illness.

Guilt/Regret

We may blame ourselves for something we did or did not, say or do. We might be saying “if only I would've or could've.” This emotion can pass in time. If you continue to believe you did something wrong and are unable to forgive yourself, seek help from someone who can listen non-judgmentally.

Loneliness

Visitors have left, the house is quiet and empty. You wonder how you can go on like this. Reaching out to others is crucial so you don't self-isolate.

Anxiety/Panic

Emotions of grief can feel scary. You may feel you are losing your mind and not able to function. You may fear the future or worry that something else will happen. A brisk walk or another physical activity, can help calm emotions. If symptoms become too intense to handle on your own, contact your doctor.

Sadness

We may feel we do not enjoy activities or people anymore; life feels like the pits. We may not care whether we wake up tomorrow. There are days the sadness will be overwhelming and other days it may not feel as intense. If you feel immobilized by sadness or have thoughts of harming yourself, seek professional help.

Confused/Disoriented

Many people could feel disoriented and find it difficult to concentrate, forgetting where things are or having trouble following conversations. Be patient with yourself, make lists, and do tasks for 15 minutes at a time. Ask others to remind you of appointments. Know that this too shall pass.

“No one ever told me that grief felt so like fear.”

—C.S. Lewis

Listed above are experiences you may or may not have at different times throughout the grieving process.



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