



Grief and the Grieving Process

Go gently and be patient with yourself. Seek help as needed.

Grief is a normal and natural reaction to the death of a loved one, often generating secondary losses. Grief can be compared to an open wound. With great care, grief will heal, but it will always leave a scar. The experience of grief can also be compared to enduring a fierce storm at sea. Waves peak and are close together, the sea calms, but then the storm can strengthen again without warning.

What to Expect

There is no timetable, or correct way to grieve. Everyone's grieving style is unique and individuals will process grief according to their personality, coping skills, past life experiences, and circumstances surrounding the death of their loved one. One's spiritual beliefs, support system, or lack thereof, in addition to financial concerns, can all impact the grieving process. A perceived length of time, grief "should take," placed on the bereaved, by themselves, family, friends, or others may add pressure.

Physical Reactions

Physical symptoms may be changes in appetite, sleeplessness, oversleeping, tightness in throat, headaches, stomachaches, chest pain, and digestive disorders. Get a physical checkup. Make sure symptoms are not related to another cause. Be sure you tell your doctor you have experienced a loss.

Emotional Reactions

Fear, anger, guilt, lowered self-esteem, intense loneliness, resentment, and ongoing distress over life's changes are experiences of grief. One may also experience difficulty concentrating, unusual dreams or nightmares, isolation, chemical abuse or dependency, becoming a workaholic, or developing insensitivity. Thoughts and feelings of unresolved grief can be intensified by thoughts and memories of past losses.

Differences in Grieving

Some people easily express their emotions and seek company, while others may choose to grieve by themselves. Grieving styles will differ.

Contributing Factors

- Childhood experiences, family expectations, role models, personality, and attitude are all variables in handling grief.
- Inability to have a farewell ceremony (funeral, cremation, or other).
- Lack of, or conflicts within, a support system, poor coping skills, mental health, or physical issues, can all be factors.

What Helps

Strategies include writing, keeping a journal, artwork, creative projects, utilizing spiritual practices, exercise, getting in touch with nature, joining a support group, or attending counseling. You cannot predict exactly how you will feel or react to grief.

Grief is often referred to as "Grief Work," it is an ongoing process towards healing.



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