

Understanding Grief

What is Grief?

“Grief is the normal response of sorrow, emotion, and confusion that comes from losing someone or something important to you. It is a natural part of life. Grief is a typical reaction to death, divorce, job loss, a move away from family and friends, or loss of good health due to illness.”

SAMHSA



Signs and Symptoms of Grief

Mental and Physical Signs—sadness, depression, anger, fear, panic, stomach problems, gastrointestinal disturbances, weight gain, weight loss, emptiness, trembling

Neurological and Other Symptoms—trouble sleeping, confusion, loss of concentration, limited attention span, headaches, body aches/pains, shortness of breath, feeling anxious, agitation, fatigue, weakness

A Normal and Natural Process of Life

It is important to remember experiencing grief is a normal and natural process and feeling in our lives. The grief you feel is a reaction to experiencing the loss of someone or any major loss due to a traumatic incident

The length of time spent grieving is different for each person and will depend on your relationship with the person you have lost or event causing the grief and how prepared you were for the loss.

5 Stages of Grief & Emotions

1. Denial—avoidance, confusion, elation, shock, fear
2. Anger—frustration, irritation, anxiety
3. Bargaining—struggling to find meaning, reaching out to others, telling one's story
4. Depression—overwhelmed, helplessness, hostility, flight
5. Acceptance—exploring options, new plan in place, moving on

Kübler-Ross Grief Cycle

Types of Grief

■ Acute Grief

This happens early after the loss and the grief can seem to control your life and interrupt one's normal activities.

■ Integrated Grief

This is an enduring form of grief in which the behaviors and feelings are more integrated into your life and do not control them.

■ Complicated Grief

This type of grief is intense and constant and causes maladaptive thoughts that contribute to the grief controlling your life.

The Center for Complicated Grief



What You Need During Grief:

There is no certain timetable for how long you will feel grief. And though there is no cure, there are ways you can help yourself begin to heal:

- Give yourself time.
- Accept the care others provide and return the care.
- Rest, relax, exercise, and replenish.
- Set small goals for things to look forward to.
- Try to find hope and comfort in others.

The Grieving Process

“Every person who experiencing a death or other loss must complete a four-step grieving process:

1. Accept the loss
2. Work through and feel the physical and emotional pain of grief
3. Adjust to living in a world without the person or item lost
4. Move on with life ”

SAMHSA

Self Care Tips to Ease Your Grief

- Take a long leisurely walk
- Try better eating practices (healthier meals/snacks)
- Practice good sleeping habits
- Decrease screen/ TV time closer to bedtime
- Stay hydrated

It is important to develop coping skills that are unique to your own personal needs and desires.

If Your Grief Persists and Becomes Problematic:

Remember, feeling grief is a normal and natural process of life and has no certain timetable for how long it should last.

However, if you find these feelings persist and negatively affect your life, **ask for help**.

Resources

Office of Behavioral Health’s Keep Calm Line
1-866-310-7977

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-8255

En Español: 1-888-628-9454

Deaf/hard of hearing: 1-800-799-4889
www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/GetHelp/LifelineChat.aspx

Crisis Text Line

Text REACHOUT to 741741

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network
www.nctsn.org

The National Alliance on Mental Illness
1-800-950-6264
www.nami.org