



## Grief

The "crazy" feelings of grief are actually a sane response to grief. The following examples are all symptoms of normal grief:

- distorted thinking patterns, "crazy" and/or irrational thoughts, fearful thoughts
- feelings of despair and hopelessness
- out of control or numbed emotions
- changes in sensory perceptions (sight, taste, smell, etc.).
- increased irritability
- may want to talk a lot or not at all
- memory lags and mental "short-circuits"
- inability to concentrate
- obsessive focus on the loved one
- losing track of time
- increase or decrease of appetite and/or sexual desire
- difficulty falling or staying asleep
- dreams in which the deceased seems to visit the griever
- nightmares in which death themes are repeated
- physical illness like the flu, headaches or other maladies
- shattered beliefs about life, the world, and even God

Grief will take longer than you've ever imagined. It tends to intensify at three months, special dates and the one year anniversary.

Grief is a journey, a process and there is resolution. Hear the words of Scripture:

"I weep with grief, my heart is heavy with sorrow; encourage and cheer me with your words." Psalm 119:28, TLB

"He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds-curing their pains and their sorrows." Psalm 147:3, AMP

"I cried to the Lord in my suffering and he heard me, he set me free from all my fears." Psalm 34:6, NL T "For You have delivered me from death, my eyes and tears, and my feet from stumbling and falling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living." Psalm 116:8-9, AMP

"Then maidens will dance and be glad, young men and old as well, I will turn their mourning into gladness; I will give them comfort and joy instead of sorrow." Jeremiah 31: 13

"You will grieve but your grief will turn to joy." John 16:6



## **Sudden Loss**

1. The capacity to cope is diminished as the shock overwhelms the person at same time additional stressors are added.
2. The loss doesn't make sense, and can't be understood or absorbed.
3. Sudden loss or sudden death usually leaves the survivor with a sense of unreality that may last a long time.
4. Symptoms of acute grief and of physical and emotional shock persist for a prolonged period of time.
5. Sudden loss or death fosters a stronger-than-normal sense of guilt expressed in "if only..." statements.
6. In sudden loss or death, the need to blame someone for what happened is extremely strong.
7. There's a profound loss of security and confidence in the world which affects all areas of life and increases many kinds of anxiety.
8. Sudden loss or death often involves medical and legal authorities.
9. Sudden loss or death often elicits a sense of helplessness on the part of the survivor.
10. The loss cuts across experience in the relationship and tends to highlight what was happening at the time of death, often causing these last-minute situations to be out of proportion with the rest of the relationship and predisposing to problems with realistic recollection and guilt.
11. Sudden loss or death leaves the survivor with many regrets and a sense of unfinished business
12. There's no chance to say goodbye and no closure.
13. In the event of sudden loss or death there is the need to understand why it happened. Along with this is the need to ascribe not only the cause but the blame. Sometimes God is the only available target and it is not uncommon to hear someone say, "I hate God."
14. The death tends to be followed by a number of major secondary losses because of the consequences of lack of anticipation.
15. The death can provoke posttraumatic stress responses.



## **Effects on Marriage**

- If your marriage was close before, that strength now may be a disadvantage. It makes both of you particularly vulnerable to the feelings of blame and anger that griever often displace onto those nearest them.
- Communication problems often develop in reaction to the grief:
- One of you asks the other unanswerable questions, such as why the death occurred.
- One of you avoids communicating with the other out of fatigue or for fear it will upset that person.
- One of you makes irrational demands, such as asking the other to take away the pain.
- One of you makes rational but unrealistic demands, such as requesting that one of you assume all the duties of the other.
- Differences in how each of you grieve -Instrumental- Intuitive
- Differences also can be expected in other areas of grief:
- How you express your feelings-one of you may want to talk about your child, while the other may want to avoid discussing him.
- How you carry out your work or daily activities-one of you may find comfort in returning to work. which may provide a respite from your grief, while the other may be overwhelmed by responsibilities that only highlight the loss.
- How you relate to things that trigger memories of your child-one of you may want all the photographs to be removed from the home. while the other will want to make sure they are all hanging up.
- How you respond to your surviving children-one of you may withdraw from them in an attempt to protect them from your grief, while the other struggles to remain open to them. appropriately share grief. and remain as normal as possible with them.
- How you deal with the support of others--one of you may want to attend self-help group meetings, while the other prefers not to discuss your deceased child and avoids all other bereaved parents.
- How you cope with your sexual relationship-one of you may be interested in resuming sexual intimacy, while the other may feel uncomfortable and conflicted about having sex.



- How you react to socializing and resuming your life--one of you may feel that if you ever enjoy life again you are betraying your child, while the other feels life must go on, and some enjoyment is healthy.
- How you search for the meaning of what has happened--one of you may find comfort in religion, while the other may give up former religious beliefs.
- What problem areas you experience in grief--one of you may have difficulty in letting out feelings and asking for support, while the other may have difficulty in expressing anger. (Original Source Unknown)

### Guidelines for the Grievors

- Remember, if someone says something like, "It's time now to get on with your life," you have the right to say, "In my time and God's time, not in anyone else's time."
- If you want to wear black you can. You can also wear any other color you want during the time you are grieving.
- If you need isolation for a while that is okay. You will be with people when you are ready.
- Find a safe time and place to "go crazy" if you want to. Go yell in the woods, throw rocks at trees. swear at the TV or wear the deceased's clothes to bed.
- Be kind to yourself. Perfection is not necessary; there is no arriving, only going. There is no need to judge where you are in your journey. It is enough that you are traveling.
- Make a commitment to your future. Commitment enables you to bypass all your fears, mental escapes and justifications, so that you can face whatever you are experiencing in the moment.
- Get out of your own way. The main block to healing from loss is the thought that we shouldn't be where we are, that we should already be further along in our growth than we perceive ourselves to be. Let these expectations go.
- Affirm yourself. Who you were and who you will be are insignificant compared to who you are.
- Fear is not always a bad thing. If you allow yourself to experience fear fully, without trying to push it away, an inner shift takes place that initiates transformation.



## A Guide for Those Helping Others with Grief

- Don't try to find the magic words or formula to eliminate the pain.
- Help with responsibilities.
- Talk through decisions.
- Remember that time does not heal all wounds.
- Avoid judging.
- Make a list of everything that needs to be done with the bereaved.
- Don't try to minimize or make the person feel better.
- Don't expect the person to reach out to you.
- Don't be afraid to say the name of the deceased.
- Remind the bereaved to take care of themselves.
- Share a meal.
- Make a personal commitment to help person get through this.