



WHAT IS GRIEF?

1. It's a natural reaction to any important change or loss.
2. Grief is a healthy, human response to situations such as:
 - Death of a loved one
 - Separation or divorce
 - Miscarriage
 - Injury or disability
 - Loss of a job, property or pet
 - Children leaving home
3. The greatest loss we experience is:
 - When a loved one dies
4. Grief is a painful experience, but the pain does subside.

UNDERSTANDING GRIEF

Everyone experiences loss or change at some time in life, so understanding grief can help you:

1. Face the reality and deal with feelings of:
 - Fear
 - Loneliness
 - Despair
 - Helplessness
2. Recover and grow
 - To be a stronger person
 - Accept your loss
 - Live a happy, full life again

FEELINGS GRIEVING PEOPLE SHARE

1. Shock and denial
Your first reaction may be to deny your loss or to feel emotionally numb. Eventually, you'll be able to face the reality of your loss.



2. Anger

Your loss may seem unfair. You may feel angry with yourself and others for not preventing the loss, but you can work through your anger.

3. Guilt

It's not unusual to blame yourself for something you did or didn't do prior to your loss. Remember, you are only human – there are events you just can't control.

4. Depression

You may feel drained and unable to perform even routine tasks. Eventually, you will become involved in life again.

5. Loneliness

Increased responsibilities and changes in your life can make you feel lonely and afraid. As you meet new challenges and develop new friendships, these feelings will fade.

6. Hope

You will reach a stage where you can focus on your future filled with hope.

***No matter how difficult life may get,
You can pull through!***

LIVING WITH LOSS

Take care of your Emotional Needs:

1. Express your feelings

Holding painful feelings inside can create more problems.

2. Ask for help

Relatives and friends want to help, but often don't know what to do. Professional help is also available if feelings of despair and worthlessness persist.

3. Accept help

Friends can make difficult moments easier. For many people, religious faith, and support from the clergy and members of the faith community can be a great comfort.



4. Be kind to yourself

Some days will be more difficult than others, but you will recover. Avoid making any major decisions until you fully recover from your loss.

Take care of your Physical Needs:

1. Get plenty of rest

You will have more energy to handle problems and to get involved in activities.

2. Stay healthy

Eat a well-balanced diet and exercise regularly (after consulting your physician). Avoid alcohol, tranquilizers and other potentially harmful substances.

3. Be alert for problems

Headaches, nausea, dizziness, heartburn, shortness of breath, weight loss, difficulty sleeping and lack of energy may be stress-related. Get medical help if they persist.

4. See your physician

He or she may be able to help.

SET GOALS AND WORK TO REACH THEM

1. Start with short-term goals

- List some short activities
 - write letters
 - visit friends
 - prepare a favorite meal
- Set time limits for completing activities
- Recognize your progress
 - give yourself a pat on the back for your hard efforts
- Take things one day at a time

2. Develop long-range plans

- Write down goals for the future



- get a new job
 - take a trip
 - continue your education
 - try a new hobby
- Set time limits for reaching your goals
- Check your progress periodically:
 - reexamine your goals
 - adjust your plans
 - don't give up

Try New Activities

1. Join a club or organization
Being with people who have similar interests can be rewarding and fun.
2. Do some volunteer work
When you help others you also help yourself.
3. Take a course
Check on adult-education and college programs in your area. Choose a subject or skill you've always wanted to explore.
4. Evaluate your career goals
If you don't have a job, you may want to begin one. If you're not happy with your present job, you might consider finding a new one.

HELPING A GRIEVING PERSON

OFFER EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

1. Be present if you can
Just being near can be a tremendous help. Don't be afraid to give the person a hug or hold his or her hand. If you can't be present - write, phone, send flowers, etc., to show your concern.
2. Be a good listener
A sympathetic listener can be a great comfort.



3. Encourage independence

A grieving person may need to be reminded that he or she can handle a new way of life.

4. Be patient

It takes time to accept loss and to deal with changes.

PROVIDE PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE

1. Help with chores

- relieve the person of grocery shopping
- do housework, etc.

2. Assist with cards and letters

- help write - thank you notes and other correspondence

3. Lend a hand with meals

- bring cooked food to their home
- invite them to dinner at your home

4. Answer the telephone

- screen calls and take messages

Remember - recovery takes time. Continue your support as long as it's needed.

SOME MYTHS ABOUT GRIEF

1. Tears are a sign of weakness

WRONG. Tears are a natural way to release intense feelings. There is not shame in showing how you feel about losing a loved one.

2. Children should be sheltered from grief

WRONG. Kids need to grieve. Tell them about the loss in an honest, loving way. They, too, need to talk about their grief.

3. It's best to avoid discussing a loss with a grieving person

WRONG. Grieving people are grateful for friends who share memories and talk about the pain created by the loss.

4. An end of grief means an end to caring about a loved one

WRONG. Love lasts beyond grief through a commitment to living life fully.



LOSS AND GRIEF A NATURAL PART OF LIFE

1. Understand grief
2. Believe that you will adjust
3. Learn to accept your loss and grow from your experience
4. Seek help when you need it

***LIVE LIFE TO ITS FULLEST ONCE
AGAIN!***

SOURCES OF HELP AND INFORMATION

COUNSELORS

Types of Counseling:

1. Individual Counseling - helps you resolve your grief by working with a therapist on a one-to-one basis.
2. Group Therapy - allows group members to help each other by sharing experiences.
3. Family Counseling - helps the family work through their grief together.

Choosing a Counselor:

Counselors help people understand themselves, create new goals, and adjust to their loss.

If you need help in choosing a counselor, ask your friends, physician, a member of the clergy, or social service organizations for recommendations.

SUPPORT GROUPS

1. **Bereavement Groups** - provide emotional and practical help for people coping with the death of a loved one.
2. **Parents Without Partners** - helps people who are separated, divorced or widowed. Check your phone book for the chapter in your area.



3. **Widowed Persons Service** – programs help widowed persons to deal with their loss and the new situations they may encounter.

Contact: Widowed Persons Service
American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)
601 East Street. NW
Washington, DC 20049

OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

1. Local Mental Health Associations and Center – may provide education, referral services or bereavement groups.
2. Hospices – help dying patients and their families deal with death through counseling, volunteer visits, support groups, etc.
3. Social Service Organizations – and local hospitals may also offer referral services and other assistance.