

What It Is

Grief is a necessary process that helps individuals adjust to a loss. Grief is not a sign of weakness or a lack of faith. Grief is a normal reaction to the loss of someone who has been significant in your life.

Although everyone experiences grief, each person responds differently to the death of someone who has been important to them. There is no single process by which all people adjust to loss; nor is there a set time frame in which one must mourn.

Are there stages of grief?

In 1969, psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross introduced what became known as the “five stages of grief.” These stages of grief were based on her studies of the feelings of patients facing terminal illness, but many people have generalized them to other types of negative life changes and losses, such as the death of a loved one or a break-up. The stages don’t necessarily occur in sequence, nor does everyone experience each of them.

The five stages of grief:

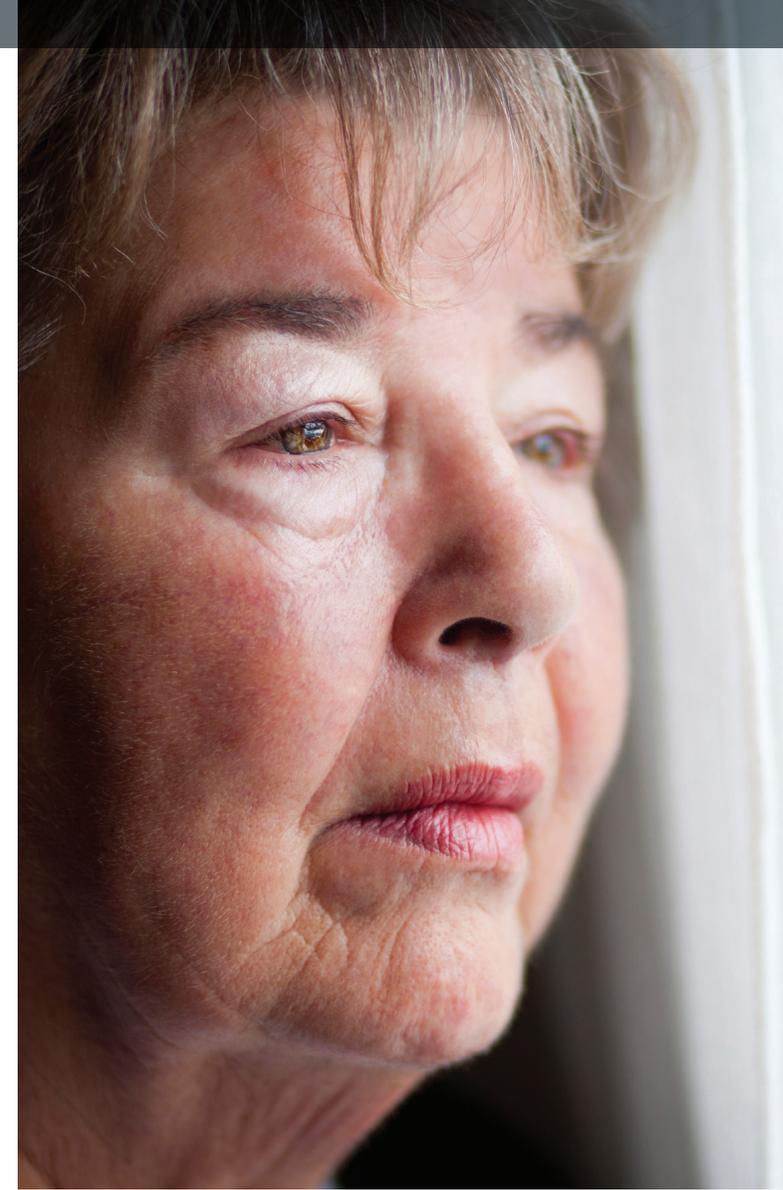
- Denial: “This can’t be happening to me.”
- Anger: “Why is this happening? Who is to blame?”
- Bargaining: “Make this not happen, and in return I will ____.”
- Depression: “I’m too sad to do anything.”
- Acceptance: “I’m at peace with what happened.”

Liberty Hospice Bereavement Services

- Support letters, newsletters, and educational materials mailed for 13 months.
- Periodic Memorial Services and Bereavement Support Groups.
- Bereavement support phone calls.
- Home support visits based on needs assessment.
- Referrals to grief counselors, community support groups, and legal services based on available community services.

When to Call Liberty Bereavement

- If you need someone to talk with about your feelings or practical needs related to your loss.
- If you are experiencing a symptom for which professional help is strongly recommended, such as:
 - Thoughts of suicide.
 - Continued withdrawal, intense feelings of isolation, or prolonged periods of depression.
 - Seeking relief through alcohol or drug use.
 - Inability to function or to resume daily activities, or feeling out of control for a prolonged period of time.



Understanding Grief



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Considerations

You may experience some of the following physical symptoms associated with normal grief:

- An empty feeling in the stomach
- Extreme tension and irritability
- Fatigue; insomnia
- Lack of muscle power
- Loss of appetite
- Tearfulness

You may experience some of the following emotional symptoms associated with normal grief:

- A feeling of restlessness; inability to concentrate; indecision about what to do.
- Sensing the loved ones presence, for example, expecting them to appear, hearing his or her voice, seeing his or her face.
- Frequent dreaming of the loved one.
- Experiencing an intense preoccupation with the life of the deceased; telling, retelling and remembering things about the loved one.
- Feeling guilty or angry over things that happened in your relationship.
- Experiencing mood changes over small things; crying at unexpected times.
- Feeling that the future has no purpose for you.

What to Do

- Reach out to personal friends/groups that can offer you support and help.
- Remind yourself that everyone needs adequate time to grieve.
- Recall how you have coped with similar feelings in the past and build on those strengths.
- Talk to someone you trust about your feelings.
- Use any spiritual beliefs that bring comfort to you.
- Express yourself through activities such as art, music, poetry, journalizing, and gardening.
- Attend a memorial service for your loved one.
- Establish a set of “little” hopes and events to look forward to.
- Create or continue rituals designed to help in the work of grief, for example, writing a letter to the deceased or lighting a candle on his or her birthday.
- Read a book or listen to a tape to assist you in working through your grief.

Titles that might be helpful:

How to Survive the Loss of a Loved One
by Melba Colgrove, Harold Bloomfield,
and Peter McWilliams.

Good Grief by Granger Westberg.

When Bad Things Happen to Good People
by Rabbi Harold Kushner.

Don't Take My Grief Away by Alan Wolfelt.

The Courage to Grieve by Judy Tatelbaum.

A Child's View of Grief (a Guide for Caring Adults)
by Alan Wolfelt.

The Fall of Freddie the Leaf by Leo Buscaglia.

Common Threads of Teenage Grief by Helm Publishing.

Myths and Facts about Grief

MYTH: The pain will go away faster if you ignore it.

FACT: Trying to ignore your pain or keep it from surfacing will only make it worse in the long run. For real healing it is necessary to face your grief and actively deal with it.

MYTH: It's important to be “be strong” in the face of loss.

FACT: Feeling sad, frightened, or lonely is a normal reaction to loss. Crying doesn't mean you are weak. You don't need to “protect” your family or friends by putting on a brave front. Showing your true feelings can help them and you.

MYTH: If you don't cry, it means you aren't sorry about the loss.

FACT: Crying is a normal response to sadness, but it's not the only one. Those who don't cry may feel the pain just as deeply as others. They may simply have other ways of showing it.

MYTH: Grief should last about a year.

FACT: There is no right or wrong time frame for grieving. How long it takes can differ from person to person.

Source: Center for Grief and Healing.

Please call our office at
844-651-5111
Monday through Friday,
8:00 am – 4:30 pm.

for further information regarding our services