

UNDERSTANDING GRIEF

When someone dies, or we lose something significant to us, it is normal to have a range of reactions – this is called Grief. It can be the loss of a person, relationship, pet, job, body part, home, etc. Grief is a normal reaction to any significant loss.

Grief often involves some or all of the following

- Being in a state of shock, disbelief, denial (especially if the death is sudden)
- Expression of a variety of emotions, e.g., tears, anger, sadness
- Depression and a sense of loneliness
- Physical symptoms of distress, e.g. lack of sleep
- Panic or anxiety
- A sense of guilt about the loss
- Inability to return to usual activities – the past was perfect, the future seems to offer little
- Gradual emergence of hope – we realise the past had its faults and the future may not be so bad
- Letting go the images of the past and development of new life patterns
- Gradually we begin to live with the loss – we recognise the loss, but are no longer so disturbed by it

Some things to do when moving through the grieving stages

1. Listen to yourself and give yourself the time that you need.
2. Take your feelings seriously and allow yourself to experience them fully.
3. Accept the pain, the hurt, the caring of theirs. Talk to a counsellor through your EAP programme.
4. Have a plan for each day, one task, one goal, one day at a time.
5. Make the most of moments when you are feeling okay.
6. Recall and build on the successes, the high points, the happy memories of the past.
7. Allow yourself to appreciate the pain as part of life.
8. Turn your blocks into stepping stones, allowing the hard experiences in life to teach you and push you forward rather than back.
9. Seek out and develop creative activities or outlets, not just "busy work"
10. Find a way to release and let go of the loved one.
11. Picture yourself entering into your daily activities with ease, interest and serenity.
12. Don't expect too much and don't be too hard on yourself. Use all the resources of your own inner being but set realistic goals.
13. Share your learnings and experiences and look out for others.
14. Find strength, hope and comfort in faith, in God, or inspiration of any kind. What is helpful to you is what matters.

"When you are sorrowful, look again in your heart and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight."

The Prophet

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