



Grief, Loss, and Resilience



WELLNESS • RECOVERY • RESILIENCE

What is grief: Grief is our natural response to any loss. The loss can be a...

- **Death:** like a parent, grandparent or other caretaker, sibling, death of a child, other relatives, friends, pet, teacher
- **Separation:** divorce; a move; incarceration of family member, friend, or self; entry into foster home; end of romantic relationship or friendship
- **Change:** There can be loss in change, like moving from childhood to teen years with increasing responsibilities.

What does grief look like?

Social effects include:

- ❖ Avoiding things that remind you of your person or loss
- ❖ Losing interest in hobbies or things you usually enjoy doing
- ❖ Avoiding being alone
- ❖ Withdrawing from people
- ❖ Feeling different from your friends/classmates

Mental/Cognitive reactions include:

- ❖ Forgetfulness
- ❖ Difficulty focusing, absentmindedness
- ❖ Trouble learning new things
- ❖ Having vivid or disturbing dreams
- ❖ Magical thinking

Physical effects include:

- ❖ Sleep disturbances
- ❖ Shortness of breath
- ❖ Tightness in throat
- ❖ Changes in appetite
- ❖ Weight loss/gain

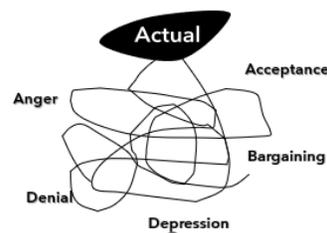
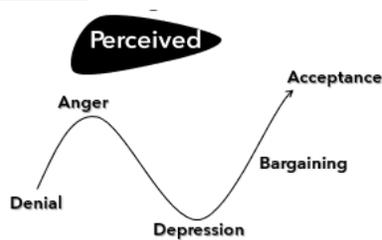
Behavioral Reactions:

- ❖ Aggressive behaviors
- ❖ Withdrawn/passive behaviors
- ❖ Self-doubt increases
- ❖ Reckless or self-destructive
- ❖ Hyperactivity

Spiritual effects include:

- ❖ Existential questions about the meaning of life
- ❖ Questioning your beliefs
- ❖ Anger at God/your higher power
- ❖ Deeper sense of spirituality
- ❖ Reminders to not take people for granted

Stages of grief & loss



Children grieve differently than adults

- Preschool children usually see death as temporary and reversible
- Children between 5 and 9 begin to think more like adults about death

Look out for:

- An extended period of sadness, withdrawal from friends
- inability to sleep
- loss of appetite
- prolonged fear of being alone
- acting much younger for an extended period
- repeated statements of wanting to join the dead person

****If these signs persist, professional help may be needed.**

Prolonged Grief Disorder

When the feeling of intense grief persists, and the symptoms are severe enough to cause problems and stop them from continuing with their lives. For a diagnosis of prolonged grief disorder, the loss of a loved one had to have occurred at least a year ago for adults, and at least 6 months ago for children and adolescents. In addition, the person's bereavement lasts longer than might be expected based on social, cultural, or religious norms.

Symptoms of prolonged grief disorder (APA, 2022) include:

- Identity disruption (such as feeling as though part of oneself has died).
- Marked sense of disbelief about the death.
- Avoidance of reminders that the person is dead.
- Intense emotional pain (such as anger, bitterness, sorrow) related to the death.
- Difficulty with reintegration (such as problems engaging with friends, pursuing interests, planning for the future).
- Emotional numbness (absence or marked reduction of emotional experience).
- Feeling that life is meaningless.
- Intense loneliness (feeling alone or detached from others).

Helping children cope with grief

- ✓ Ask questions to see where the child's emotional state is.
- ✓ Give them permission to grieve.
- ✓ Provide age and developmentally appropriate answers.
- ✓ Practice calming and coping strategies with your child.
- ✓ Take care of yourself and model coping strategies for your child.
- ✓ Maintain routines as much as possible.
- ✓ Spend time together doing other activities they enjoy.

What can we do with our grief

- ✓ Recognize it
- ✓ Don't be afraid of it
- ✓ Express it
- ✓ Invite it in
- ✓ Understand it
- ✓ Cherish it

Staying connect with the people we've lost

- ✓ Include them in special events or holidays
- ✓ Keep photos of your loved one(s) around
- ✓ Write letters to them, keep letter, or create a ritual to release them
- ✓ Imagine that advice they would give you when you faced a tough decision
- ✓ Talk to them- in your head or out loud

Resilience in the Midst of Grief

- Accept the good
- Seek positive emotions
- Establish routines/rituals

Tips for Building Resilience

- Name what you have lost and any accompanying feelings
- Why were they important to you? What values did they tap in to?
- How can you celebrate and honor what you have lost?
- What rituals will help you with that?
- How can you be helpful to others in alignment with your values during this time?



“SEEK HELP, YOU ARE NOT ALONE.”

Emergency & Non-Emergency Helpline. Operates 24 hours a day 7 days a week

Call: 1800-854- 7771 TDD/TTY: 562-651-2549