

Dealing with Grief

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Grief is a period of sadness following the loss of a loved one. It can affect you in many ways such as psychologically, physically, socially, economically and spiritually.

Psychologically	<p>Fear and anxiety You may experience fear or anxiety at certain times or it may be present all the time. These emotions come from the unknown and the unfamiliarity you are facing from the new world without your loved one and your own difficulty in dealing with this new world. Discussing these feelings with a professional can help you.</p> <p>Anger and guilt Anger is often seen as a result of being deprived of the loved one's presence or the feeling of being abandoned. Your irritability, frustration and intolerance may be a form of anger. It is also normal to feel guilty about many reasons such as: things you should have done or said or the time you should have been patient, nice or supportive and so on.</p> <p>A good listener who is non-judgmental is very helpful. He will help you verbalize your feelings. It allows you to forgive yourself.</p> <p>Loneliness Loneliness for the person that died and for this past relationship is part of the bereavement process. You may feel a physical emptiness.</p> <p>Depression It is a normal reaction. You may feel sad, you may feel a lack of energy or even a lack of motivation. You may cry or you may not.</p> <p>Lack of concentration Often during the grieving period, you may have memory lapses and problems getting organized. These are normal reactions. You may feel unable to make decisions. You may also be easily distracted. Try to use agendas or lists if you tend to forget things. Don't be afraid to ask for help.</p>
Physically	<p>Body and mind are linked together. Often our grief manifests itself physically.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You may tend to neglect yourself.• Have difficulty sleeping.• You may feel like eating all the time or may lose appetite causing a weight gain or weight loss.• Heart palpitations, shortness of breath are usual indications of anxiety.• Stress may make you more susceptible to disease.• If your symptoms alarm you or if someone urges you to see a doctor,

	do so.
Socially	<p>At the outset of the bereavement period, friends and family are usually easily available. If you need them later on, let them know. Sometimes you may feel you need to be alone or you may want to be with friends.</p> <p>Social gatherings can be difficult for you due to your lack of motivation or physical exhaustion. Don't try to avoid them.</p> <p>Grief heals slowly. There is no magical recipe to make you forget the loved one more rapidly. You are experiencing a change and it takes time to adjust.</p>
Economically	<p>Within the first year following the death of a loved one, it is highly recommended NOT to make major and hasty decisions unless it is essential.</p> <p>Consult an expert before making financial decisions.</p> <p>Voluntary work in the community or seeking employment may be helpful but only when you are ready.</p> <p>Don't be afraid to seek advice or help. Many people prefer to remain in their familiar surroundings while they consider their future.</p>
Spiritually	<p>Anger towards one's faith is common. Some people wonder about their own philosophy of life after a loved one's death. Others may find great comfort in their faith.</p>
Children and Grief	<p>Most children show symptoms such as lack of appetite, anger, sleep disturbances and changes in behavior.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children need to talk about death and also need a good listener. • It is important to include the children in funerals or other mourning rituals and to give them permission to cry. • Children may need some solitude for healing. • It is important that they understand that the loved one will not return. • If possible, avoid abrupt changes in their routine; this may accentuate their feelings of loss. • If the children need professional help, don't be afraid to ask for it.

Reading Material

Grieving: How to go on living when someone you love dies
 by Thérèse A. Rando PhD
 Levington Books

Dealing with Grief

pamphlet published by Palliative Care Services of Royal Victoria Hospital

Contacts

If you need to talk to someone or would like to meet us, call (613) 632-1111, Extension 355 and leave your message. We will call you back as soon as possible.

Other contacts:

- your physician
- Prescott & Russell Royal Comtois Centre at (613) 632-0139