



GRIEF

WHAT IS GRIEF?

It describes the way we feel after any kind of loss. Often, people associate grief with death but losing anyone or anything important to us, including a relationship (e.g. divorce, separation or end of a friendship), job, pet, an important role in life, a home or even a cherished possession, can cause feelings of grief.

The emotions of grief and the grieving process are painful but are natural and a necessary part of the healing process. Acknowledging and permitting the grief process leads to a healthy recovery. Think of it as going through your grief rather than getting over the loss.

There is no one way or right way to grieve. People respond in many ways to loss. There is also no schedule or timetable for recovery from loss. If you allow grief to run its course, it will.

STAGES OF GRIEF

- Feeling shock or disbelief that the person or thing is gone.
- Experiencing the pain of the loss. This can include a wide range of emotions: sadness, anger, guilt, anxiety.
- Adjusting to a new environment. Emotionally this can be difficult but hope is present.
- Integration into the outside world. Going through daily life and remembering the person

SOME WAYS TO MANAGE GRIEF:

- Get support from friends and/or relatives. Plan time with others during times you're likely to feel alone or reminded of the loss.
- Give yourself quiet time alone when you need it.
- Tell someone you trust the story of your loss.
- Be as open as you can be in expressing your feelings.
- Take good care of yourself. Eat well-balanced meals and get plenty of rest.
- Be patient with yourself. It takes time to heal. Some days will be better than others.
- Be prepared for reawakened grief on important anniversary dates or other times that are reminders of the loss.
- Plan for distraction

SOME WAYS TO SUPPORT SOMEONE WHO IS GRIEVING:

- Follow their lead and let them grieve at their own pace, in their own way.
- Resist judging how they are grieving (e.g. Are they crying too much? Or not enough?) or the length of time they are grieving.
- Try not to pressure someone to find "closure" or "look on the bright side".
- Show empathy (e.g. "I'm sorry you're going through this. It must be really difficult. What can I do?")
- Acknowledge the loss
- Listen and validate their thoughts and feelings.

Grief and depression can overlap. If grief becomes overwhelming, interferes with daily living, or feelings of sadness, anxiety, irritability, trouble sleeping, fatigue, crying, or lack of interest in hobbies, eating or taking care of one's self do not lessen with time, a person may be experiencing depression.

For free, confidential counseling for Gwynedd Mercy University students, contact:

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