

Mourning After Stroke: Why It Happens and How to Get Through It

July 28, 2017



If you are going through mourning after stroke, then know that you are not alone.

Grief and mourning are common emotional stroke side effects that deserve to be honored instead of brushed aside. If you or a loved one are going through mourning and would like some guidance to help navigate this time, then this article is for you.

The Importance of Mourning

Mourning is the sorrow we feel associated with loss. It typically occurs after the loss of a loved one, but it can also occur after the loss of *anything* that we cherish.

For stroke survivors, there are many [different losses](#) that accompany stroke. For instance, some may feel like they've lost their old lives or like they've lost their ability to fit in.

These losses should not be written off – although that's what many of us will try to do.

Whenever we feel emotional pain, we want to get rid of it immediately by telling ourselves to ‘just toughen up’ or ‘never let them see the sweat.’

This is the opposite of what will bring us healing.

Honoring Your Losses

Shoving bad feelings to the side leaves them undigested and impairs your ability to [find emotional healing](#).

Instead of resisting your emotions, it’s a great idea to allow yourself to grieve. This includes [the 5 stages of grief](#): denial, bargaining, anger, [depression](#), and acceptance.

It’s important to understand that these stages are NOT linear. You may oscillate between different stages or you may remain ‘stuck’ at one stage for a while.

During the grieving process, it’s especially important to **allow yourself to feel your feelings**. Don’t block yourself from your sorrow. Rather, walk into the room with it.

And as you allow yourself to feel these difficult feelings, try to exercise as much self-compassion as you can.

Self-Compassion Is Key

Self-compassion means treating yourself with gentle kindness.

Try your best to treat yourself the same way you would treat someone else going through the same situation as you.

This means avoiding labeling yourself, your situation, or your emotions as ‘bad’ and instead accepting yourself with an open heart.

This can be difficult during tough times – especially if you struggle with shame.

Learning [how to overcome shame](#) is critical for self-compassion and self-acceptance.

Don’t Get Over It – Get Through It

Exercising compassion as you move through the stages of grief and mourning will help you get through to the final stage of grief: acceptance.

Please note that we said ‘get through’ not ‘get over.’

Grief isn't something that can be shortchanged, and you cannot speed up the process. In fact, rushing to acceptance and brushing over the process will only prolong it.

Your losses deserve to be mourned and honored, and it takes time. And you can help yourself get through it by allowing yourself to feel what's there and exercising compassion with everything that comes up.

It takes immense courage and strength to open the door to grief.

This is one of the many obstacles that will make you stronger after stroke.