

Canadian Mental Health Association
Windsor-Essex County Branch

Some Normal Emotions of Grief

Loneliness - every griever feels isolated in the grief “work”. If they are isolated socially then they will experience more loneliness.

Emotional Release - tears, screaming or wailing etc. It feels good for many grievers to cry.

Anger – hostile reactions. There are often feelings of irritability and anger. These feelings may be surprising and inexplicable to the griever. Anger ay be directed at medical people, family, funeral director, clergy or God. It is a normal part of grief.

Preoccupation – with thoughts of the dead loved one. Many times the griever is unable to shift their minds from thoughts of the deceased.

Shock – or numbness. This can last up to two weeks especially when the death is sudden. Some never experience shock. Some experience feelings of denial.

Healing – reentry into life. The griever will accept the reality of the death and know that he will survive this life crisis.

Guilt – There is always some sense of guilt in grief. The bereaved think of things they should have done for the loved one and didn’t do. The more hostility the more guilt.

Depression - the griever may feel that there is nothing to live for; nothing seems worthwhile.

Physical Distress - such as tightness in the throat, shortness of breath, sighing, empty feeling in stomach, lethargy, upset stomach. These symptoms come in waves at unexpected times.

Idealization – of the loved one. Viewing the deceased as “perfect” is a common coping mechanism.

Restlessness – physical and mental. An inability to sit still or concentrate on the simplest tasks can be very distressing. It is normal and requires patience.

Illusions – visual and auditory. Sometimes the griever thinks that they hear or see the loves one.

Withdrawal – from social relationships an/or daily routines. Some griever find withdrawal at times is necessary to store up emotional strength to re-establish relationships.

Panic – fear of becoming chronically disoriented. The griever will wonder if he will ever be feeling “normal” again.

These emotions of grief will not be experiences in any give order. One day the griever will feel one emotion, the next he will feel many emotions. The grief process takes longer than most people think.