



COPING WITH GRIEF AND LOSS

LOSS IS A NATURAL PART OF LIFE. EVERYONE EXPERIENCES LOSS, BUT HOW YOU DEAL WITH IT IS PERSONAL.

LOSS BRINGS WITH IT ANOTHER NATURAL AND VERY HUMAN RESPONSE – GRIEF.

Like resting when we are tired or drinking when we are thirsty, grieving is a normal, necessary, and natural part of staying healthy. Grief is nature's way of healing an emotional wound. The process of grief takes place over time. There is no right way to grieve and each person experiences and expresses grief in their own way. The important thing is to allow yourself to grieve and not try to suppress what you are feeling.

OVERCOMING GRIEF

TASKS OF GRIEF

ACCEPT the reality of the loss

FEEL the pain of grief

ADJUST to a new environment in which the lost is missing

REINVEST emotional energy in new relationships

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Get adequate rest

Maintain healthy eating habits and exercise

Find time to talk with family and friends

Take time for leisure activities and schedule down time

Follow familiar routines

Seek medical advice or counseling if necessary

NORMAL GRIEF EXPERIENCES

PHYSICAL SENSATIONS

- Stomach hollowness, hunger, nausea, poor appetite
- Chest tightness, breathlessness, throat pain
- Shakiness/headaches
- Lack of energy, overall weakness
- Overly sensitive to noise
- Sense of depersonalization, "nothing seems real"

BEHAVIORS

- Sleep and appetite disturbance
- Crying, sighing
- Absent-minded behavior
- Social withdrawal/Restlessness
- Increase in accidents/illness
- Change in work performance
- Yelling, irritability
- Sloppy dressing; poor personal hygiene

THOUGHTS

- Disbelief: "This can't be true"
- Confusion, forgetfulness
- Preoccupation or obsessive thinking
- Finality: "Things will never be the same"
- Forging ahead: "I have to get over this"
- Dread; fear of your own or other's death
- Sense of presence or dreams of deceased

FEELINGS

- Sadness
- Anger, frustration, irritation, hostility
- Depression
- Guilt
- Victimized, helpless, out of control
- Loneliness
- Shock, numbness
- Yearning
- Fear
- Relief
- Peace, resolution

