

How Grief Affects You

Grief is a normal and healthy response to major losses in our life. The process of grief has a broad range of responses that can be experienced in these five life areas.

Physically

Crying

Difficulties sleeping

Restlessness or hyperactivity

Headache. increased aches and pain

Stomachache or nausea

Getting sick more often (colds/flu)

Tightness in the chest /throat

Changes in appetite

Feeling tired, low or lack of energy

Acting overly strong and mature

Pain around the heart (origin of the word "heartache".)

Mentally

Unable to concentrate or stay focused

Constantly thinking about the death

Flash backs

Not wanting to go on living without the person

Disbelief/ denial that the person is really dead

Feeling of craziness or lack of control

Unable to make decisions

Easily confused and forgetful

Unorganized

Stressed

Reactive, easily hurt and upset

Glorifying the person who has died

(sometimes, we only remember the good qualities or times spent with that person.)

Emotionally

Shock, Numbness

Anger (it's not fair, there is often a need to blame someone or something for the unfair situation.)

Guilt, Regret

Vulnerability, helpless, hopeless

Fear (this will happen again.)

Sadness

Loneliness

Insecurity

Worry

Confused, Overwhelmed

Relief (that the person is no longer suffering or a bad relationship is over.)

Shame (may be felt because of the nature of the death.)

Socially

Feeling left out, isolated

Feeling different, misunderstood

Inconsistent expectations of family and friends

More risk taking & attention seeking behaviours

Reactive, easily hurt and upset

Deterioration of relationships (more conflict)

Change in peer relationships

Withdrawal from family & friends

Spiritually

A loss or questioning of or anger at your faith

A strengthened faith

A rediscovery of faith or interest in other belief systems (wanting to connect with a faith community to feel a sense of belonging.)

Searching for the meaning of life (what is the purpose of life, who am I now)

An increased sense of connection with the loved one who died.

Questioning why bad things have to happen.

What you need to help you cope.

