

Natural Grief Responses

It hurts when someone dies. Allowing time to go through the natural process of grief will eventually help to ease the pain. People experience grief in many different ways. It can be emotional, physical, behavioral, cognitive and spiritual. At times, grief may feel overwhelming. It is important to remember that grief is not a problem to be solved, but rather, a process to be lived. If you or someone you know is grieving, these are some of the responses that are natural to be experiencing:

Grief can be experienced emotionally

- Sadness - a sense of sorrow
- Helplessness – difficulty in performing activities of daily living
- Hopelessness – feelings that life may not be worth living
- Fearfulness – that they or someone else will die or that they are going crazy
- Anger – that the death has occurred or that the person has left them
- Guilt – over something said or not said; something they did or did not do
- Yearning- longing or aching for one more touch, conversation or moment together

Grief can be experienced physically or behaviorally

- Changes in sleep or appetite – eating or sleeping more or less than before
- Emptiness or pain – felt physically in the chest, stomach, or elsewhere in the body
- Restlessness – inability to sit still or concentrate
- Lethargy – exhaustion or a lack of energy
- Tears- “grief bursts” that can occur at unexpected times
- Distracted behaviors- constant work or relocation; self-destructive or addictive behaviors
- Reminiscing- telling or retelling stories about the person who died; wanting to keep things exactly as they were; looking at pictures

Grief can be experienced cognitively

- Disbelief – feeling as though the death isn't real or an inability to believe that it has actually happened
- Forgetfulness – not finishing what is started; absentmindedness
- Poor focus- difficulty concentrating on tasks or lack of motivation
- Questioning- asking or wondering why the death occurred

Grief can be experienced spiritually

- Searching for meaning- wondering about the purpose in life
- Altering personal beliefs- values or beliefs may be questioned or strengthened
- A sense of the person's presence- hearing their voice, seeing their face or dreaming of the person

While there is no timeline for the heart as the feelings of grief ebb and flow, it will not always be as raw, intense and constant. Giving voice to the feelings will eventually allow for hope and healing.

Please contact OUR HOUSE Grief Support Center for consultation and professional referrals.

www.OurHouse-Grief.org

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