



The Florida Crisis Consortium
is supported by the Florida
Department of Health.

THE PROCESS OF GRIEVING

Grief is a natural response to the death of someone to whom we have been close. Grief may include feelings of numbness, disbelief, anxiety, despair, sadness, and loneliness. Although these reactions may initially seem extreme, they do typically decrease as time passes. One who is grieving may experience roller-coaster like periods where reactions and emotions fluctuate. It is important to remember that this is “normal” and that we can minimize the impact of death by accessing the support of others and by managing our reactions with proper nutrition, exercise, and stress management. Focusing our thoughts toward acceptance and gratitude for the time we had with the deceased can also reduce the impact of significant loss.

Each of us may experience grief in our own way, though there are some common elements.

There is no specific order to stages of grief. Some of the specific experiences may include denial/isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.

Reactions may be more extreme than experienced under other circumstances.

Allowing ourselves to process and express the grief in our own way is best for our health. It also reduces the possibility of long-term impact or interference.

Physical, emotional, behavioral, and cognitive symptoms may appear temporarily.

Physical responses that are related to the stress response of unexpected death may include muscle tension, appetite changes, sleep changes, energy changes, dry mouth, digestion changes.

Emotional responses may include sadness, anger, guilt, anxiety, loneliness, helplessness, hopelessness, shock, yearning, relief, and numbness.

Behavioral responses may include social withdrawal, changes in activity level, avoidance of places or reminders of the deceased, focus on reminders of the deceased.

Cognitive, or thinking, responses may include disbelief, confusion, preoccupation, dreams of the deceased.

COPING WITH GRIEF is greatly related to one's willingness to mourn and work toward acceptance of the loss. Talking about your reactions and memories of the deceased person may help as well as continuing with your normal daily activities. Also, exercise is a great way to release physical and cognitive stress. Following proper nutrition guidelines will also assist your body and mind in remaining strong and healthy. Deep breathing and muscle relaxation exercises are also great and quick ways to reduce stress and keep the body and mind healthy.

If you need help, call 211 and ask for your local mental health center or use one of the resources below:

Treatment Locators

Mental Health Services Locator
(800) 789-2647 (English and Español)
(866) 889-2647 (TDD)

www.mentalhealth.samhsa.gov/databases

Substance Abuse Treatment Facility Locator
(800) 662-HELP (4357)
(Toll-Free, 24-Hour English and Español Treatment Referral Service)
(800) 487-4889 (TDD)

www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov

Hotlines

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
(800) 273-TALK (8255)
(800) 799-4889 (TDD)

SAMHSA National Helpline
(800) 662-HELP (4357) (English and Español)
(800) 487-4889 (TDD)

Workplace Helpline
(800) WORKPLACE (967-5752)
www.workplace.samhsa.gov/helpline/helpline.htm