

University Counseling Center

Coping with Grief and Loss Understanding the Grieving Process

What is Grief?

Grief is the process of experiencing the physical , emotional, mental, social, and spiritual effects of a death or other loss.

Any loss can cause grief, including:

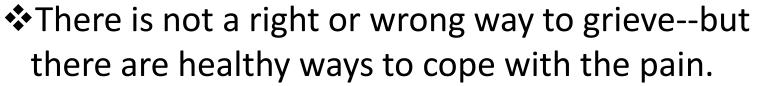
- A relationship breakup
- Loss of health
- ≻Losing a job
- Loss of financial stability
- ➢ Death of a pet
- Loss of a friendship



Understanding the Grieving Process

After a significant loss, you may experience all kinds of difficult and surprising emotions, such as:

- Shock
- Anger
- Fear
- Emptiness
- Sadness
- Anxiety
- Confusion





The Five Stages of Grief

In 1969, psychiatrist Elisabeth Kubler-Ross introduced what became known as the "Five Stages of Grief."

Denial: "This can't be happening to me."

>Anger: "Why is this happening? Who is to blame?"

Bargaining: "If you make this not happen, I promise I will_____."

Depression: "I'm too sad to do anything."

Acceptance: "I'm at peace with what happened."

Everyone Grieves Differently

People have to pass through their own individual journey of coming to terms with loss.

- How you grieve depends on many factors, including:
 - ✓ Your personality and coping style
 - ✓ Your life experience
 - ✓ Your faith
 - ✓ The nature of the loss



Unhealthy Ways of Coping With Grief and Loss

- Continuing to deny the loss
- Intellectualizing about it
- Stuffing our feelings



- Macho mentality (I'm strong; I can handle it by myself)
- Using alcohol or other drugs to suppress the pain
- Prolonged attempt to get the lost object back

Healthy Ways of Coping With Grief and Loss

- Turn to friends and family members
- Draw comfort from your faith
- Face your feelings
- Get support from a counselor
- Take care of yourself



Keep a journal or diary of your thoughts and feelings or consider writing your loved one a letter

GETTING BETTER MEANS...

- Solving problems and completing tasks in your daily work routine again
- Sleeping well and having energy again
- Feeling good enough about yourself to be hopeful about the rest of your life
- Increased focus on life and a decreased focus on death or loss
- Being able to enjoy the pleasurable and beautiful things in life again

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