

The following materials are provided by Angelic Health Hospice. It includes information we have collected from a variety of sources and the authors are not affiliated with Angelic Health. We believe you will find these resources helpful.



GRIEVING, RECOVERY AND ADJUSTMENT

Feeling and Expressing Grief

Your way of feeling and expressing grief is unique to you and the nature of your loss. You may find that at times you feel irritable and restless, are quieter than usual, or need to be distant from or close to other, or that you aren't the same person you were before the loss. Don't be surprised if you experience conflicting feelings while grieving. For example, it's normal to feel despair about a death or a job loss, yet also feel relief.

The grieving process does not happen in a step-by-step or orderly fashion. Grieving tends to be unpredictable, with sad thoughts and feelings coming and going, like a roller-coaster ride. After the early days of grieving, you may sense a lifting of numbness and sadness and experience a few days without tears. Then, for no apparent reason, the intense grief begins again.

While grieving may make you want to isolate yourself from others and hold it all in, it's important that you find some way of expressing your grief. Use whatever mode of expression comes to mind – talking, writing, creating art or music, or being physically active are all ways of expressing grief.

Spirituality often enters into the grieving process. You may find yourself looking for or questioning the higher purpose of a loss. While you may gain comfort from your religious or spiritual beliefs, you might also be moved to doubt your beliefs in the face of a traumatic loss.

Grieving Problems

In this complex and busy world, it can be difficult to fully grieve a loss. It is possible to have unresolved grief or complications associated with grieving, particularly if you:

- Had several major losses in a short period of time.
- Are grieving permanent losses caused by chronic illness or disability.
- Lost someone very important in your life—you may feel that you will never get over the loss of this someone special.
- Experienced the unexpected or violent death of this loved one, such as the death of a child or a death caused by an accident, homicide, or suicide.
- Have special life circumstances that act as obstacles to grieving, such as having to return to work too soon after the death or needing sedative medicine to cope with overwhelming emotion.
- Have a history of depression or anxiety.

Adjusting to a Loss

It can take two or more years to go through the grieving process. The length of time spent grieving depends on your relationship with the lost person. Even after 2 years, you may re-experience feelings of grief, especially over the loss of your loved one. Be prepared for this to happen during holidays, birthdays, and other special events, which typically revive feeling of grief.

Grieving is a slow process of recovery after losing someone to whom you are deeply attached; your sense of self and security is disrupted. As you adjust to this major loss, your goal is to develop or strengthen connections with other people, places, or activities. These new parts of your life are not meant to replace the person and former activities that you have lost. Instead, they serve to support you as you begin to start a new phase of your life.