

## **WHY AM I FEELING LIKE THIS?**

When we are faced with a massive, significant loss in our lives it is **NORMAL** to experience a variety of emotions and feelings.



This is grief.

There are many reactions people have after the death of someone they love. Some are physical, some are emotional.

We all react differently.

Grief is a wound that needs attention in order to heal.

To work through grief means to...

*face our feelings openly and honestly,  
to express or release our feelings fully,  
to tolerate and accept our feelings.*

For however long it takes for the wound to heal.

It takes courage to grieve.

## **COMMON REACTIONS AND FEELINGS WITH GRIEF**

Feeling numb and in shock, vague and can't believe what's happened.

It's hard to concentrate or remember things. This is the body's **NORMAL** way of coping with traumatic situations in life.

Guilt, anger and anxiety about the past and the situation.

Loneliness and depression. Feeling desperately alone, not being able to find relief, even if we have plenty of family and friends to support us.

Having difficulty sleeping and eating. Physical distress such as high blood pressure or infections. It is wise to get this checked with your doctor. You are not going crazy.



*Finding everyday situations and relationships difficult to cope with.*

Using emotional releases such as crying or angry outbursts.

Finding it impossible to return to usual activities, no interest in life.

**DO REMEMBER** that grieving is a normal process that affects people differently... you may find some of these reactions happening to you.

## **HEALING THE GRIEF**

It takes time to process all the feelings and adjust to the reactions. The first year of the grief process is often the hardest and people may feel worse at 6 months than they did at the beginning.

### **Some ideas to help you:**



Don't bottle up your feelings, crying can give relief. Find someone you trust, where you can be your true self.



Do talk about what has happened, over and over processing the loss.



Do accept yourself as human and normal in your grieving. Know that the grieving process can take 2-5 years.



Getting information about grief can help you take control of your life.



Support groups, with people who have had similar loss situations can be beneficial.

## **MEMORY TRIGGERS**

*A grief wound or scar will remain part of us for the rest of our lives.*

It is normal to feel 'down' as significant times of the year approach, such as birthdays, anniversaries and Christmas.



Often it is the weeks leading to these dates which are filled with apprehension and it can be important to plan a routine for 'the day'.

## **DIFFERENT TYPES OF GRIEVING PATTERNS**

Though we generally believe that men and women will use different ways of healing their grief, each can use parts from both the masculine and feminine grieving methods.

Many men are not comfortable expressing their feelings of pain and distress. This often results in men and women not understanding each others way of coping with grief.

Masculine roles include being seen as 'the leader' who has to maintain a 'stiff upper lip'.

*Masculine reactions to a loss often include...*



Building a wall around their emotions.



Dealing very competently with the practical issues, but not with upset feelings.

*Feminine reactions to a loss often include...*



Talking a lot about the loss.



Needing to cry and express feelings.

Each person needs to grieve in his or her own unique way.



Grief feelings **can be suppressed**, however, they often surface as illness or in other parts of relationships.

## **HELP AND SUPPORT FROM A FRIEND**

'Let me know if there's anything I can do' is often said to the grieving person.

### **This is how YOU can help a grieving friend.**

Listen to them without judgement. Let them repeat over and over their fears or anger.

Accept what they have to say. Their feelings are normal.

You don't have to have the 'right words'. Just be there, you don't have to fix their grief or cheer them up.

Make contact on special days. Anniversaries, Christmas and especially at 3, 6 and 9 months.

Allow crying and hugs. Silence is okay.

Avoid clichés e.g. you have to get on with life. Instead say '...tell me about it'.



For more grief information please look at our website

[www.SandE.com.au](http://www.SandE.com.au)

or call our

**Bereavement Care Services at  
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