

THE 5 STAGES OF GRIEF

AND WHAT THEY REALLY MEAN

1

DENIAL

Denial is a normal reaction to rationalize overwhelming emotions. It is a defense mechanism that buffers the immediate shock of loss.

2

ANGER

As the numbing effects of the denial stage of grief begins to wear off, the pain of loss starts to firmly take hold as we search for blame, feel intense guilt, and lash out.

3

BARGAINING

Bargaining is the “What if…” stage of grief and it serves an important purpose. It provides temporary escape from pain, provides hope, and gives a person time to adjust to the reality of the situation.

4

DEPRESSION

This type of depression is not a sign of mental illness, it is the appropriate response to a great loss. You might experience intense sadness, decreased sleep, reduced appetite, and loss of motivation are common.

5

ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance refers to accepting the reality of a loss and the fact that nothing can change that reality. This does NOT mean that the person is “okay” with the loss.