

Here are a few suggestions from grief therapists:

Don't let others rush you. Take as much time as you need to work through your feelings.

- ✓ Grieving is a time of instability. Put off major decisions such as moves or job changes.
- ✓ Avoid the temptation to numb the pain through excessive use of drugs or alcohol or other ritualized compulsive comfort-seeking methods. Feeling intense pain and feeling numb, for many, is a likely part of the grieving process. You are not “going crazy”, you are grieving.
- ✓ Understand that grief has its ups and downs. Don't be surprised by “backsliding” especially during holidays, anniversaries or other times of special significance.
- ✓ Crying is the healthiest expression of grief. Don't try to suppress tears for the sake of others.
- ✓ Remembering is a healthy way to mourn. Look at photos or create mental ones of the deceased. Savor special memories and learn to be with whatever arises, such as regrets or frustrations, with gentleness and without harshly judging yourself.
- ✓ Seek out friends or relatives who allow you the opportunity to talk and remember. Avoid people who can't meet you where you are at. It's okay to take a break from a friendship for a while.
- ✓ When people offer their help, let them help you! Have in mind what would support you – maybe some laundry help, food prep, vacuuming, pet-care, weekly dinners, daily phone calls or walks. Being specific with your requests makes it easier for everyone.
- ✓ If no one offers help, ask for what you need. People are not mind-readers and generally need some direction.
- ✓ Keep to a schedule, but make it simple. Allow yourself the luxury of deviating from your schedule from time to time.
- ✓ Let yourself recover. Eat healthy, rest and exercise. Consider a thorough checkup if physical distress continues.
- ✓ Don't be afraid to wonder “why.” It is a question every grieving person repeats until there is no need to ask it anymore.

Common Grief Experiences

Grief may be defined as the collection of physical, emotional, and spiritual sensations a person experiences after a significant loss. Often grief is thought of as only an emotional state. Many people are surprised to discover that grief has physical components. The following are some of what a grieving person may experience.

Emotional

- Shock
- Confusion
- Relief
- Guilt
- Regret
- Yearning
- Irritability
- Loneliness
- Depression
- Denial
- Sadness
- Anxiety
- Self-judgment
- Numbness
- Helplessness
- Hopelessness
- Anger
- Short-fuse
- Overwhelm
- Vulnerable
- Disconnected
- Hostile
- Panicked
- Depleted

Physical

- Inflammation
- Fatigue
- Lack of appetite/Increased appetite

- Difficulty sleeping/Increased sleeping
- Crying unexpectedly
- Restlessness
- Lack of energy
- Body pain and tension
- Tingling/shocking sensations anywhere in the body
- Shortness of breath
- Jittery
- Dizziness, Nausea
- Distressed gastrointestinal system
- Rapid heartbeat
- Hormonal changes

Mental

- Sensing the presence of the deceased
- Difficulty concentrating
- Social withdrawal
- Forgetfulness
- Desire to visit familiar places
- Vivid dreams
- Experiencing physical symptoms the deceased suffered
- Disinterest in others or activities previously enjoyed

Spiritual

- Seeking out spiritual support

- Crisis in personal faith
- Questioning God or higher power(s)
- Anger toward higher power(s)
- Searching for meaning