



TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER™
EL PASO



Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

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What is Grief?

Grief is a natural, instinctual reaction to the loss of someone or something we hold attachment to.

Grief is experienced differently by each person, but the following patterns are generally noted among people in mourning:

- Somatic or bodily distress
- Preoccupation
- Guilt
- Hostile reactions
- Difficulty functioning as one did prior to the loss



Grief



Deep sorry, especially that caused by someone's death. Natural response to losing someone or something that is important to you.



Types of Losses

- Loss of person due to death
- Loss of relationship (i.e., divorce, break up, severe distancing of friendships or family relationships, etc.)
- Loss of material objects with sentimental value
- Loss of ability to engage in meaningful rituals, especially those that cannot be postponed and honored at a later time (i.e., graduations, funerals, weddings, in-person schooling, etc.)
- Loss of freedom



Have Your Families or Children
Experienced Grief Recently?



Stages of Grief



- The stages may not occur in order and vary from person to person.
- People may move in and out of the stages at different times throughout the grieving process.



Stages

Denial and isolation- Block out words and facts. Deny the reality of the situation.

Anger- May be directed towards deceased, family or strangers.

Bargaining- “If only” statements

Depression-sadness and regret. Quiet preparation to bid farewell to deceased.

Acceptance- not everyone may reach this step. Make peace with ourselves and deceased.



The Grief Experience

- Grief is a complex experience involving feelings, bodily sensations,
- There is no set time limit for the duration of grief
- One can expect to experience more intense grief throughout the 1st year
- There is no right or wrong journey through grief
- Grief doesn't happen in neat stages or well-defined phases nor is it linear
- Unresolved grief (known as complicated grief) that becomes problematic and interferes with one's ability to engage in life can be a cause for concern
- Therapy can help with normal grief as well as complicated grief



Coping With Grief

Healthy

- Accepting the reality of the loss
- Acknowledging and allowing space for pain
- Adjusting to life after the loss
- Finding ways to remember what was lost while still moving forward

Unhealthy

- Denying that the loss has occurred or that it had an impact
- Engaging in activities that distract from feeling or using substances to numb the pain
- Refusing to make any changes
- Avoiding all reminders of what was lost or staying stuck in the loss



Coping With Grief

Sending cards or flowers

Preparing food

Providing Child Care

Household Chores

Offering transportation

Be available- grieving people don't want you to talk just to listen.



Other Ways To Process Grief



Create a special place in your home to honor the loss



Engage in a special ritual to honor the loss



Write a letter you don't send (you can put them in a box until you're ready to let go of them)



Journal about your feelings, things you miss, memories, or simply free write



Be mindful about your grief experience and intentional about when you make space for it



How You Can Help

Listen

Allow grieving person full range of emotions.

Be patient and understanding

It's okay to talk about memories of the deceased

Remember grieving takes time





Abnormal Bereavement

Less likely to use health services

Outreach efforts are important

May lead to depression, suicide and anxiety



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A person stands on a tree stump with their arms outstretched, symbolizing grounding. The roots of the tree are exposed and spread out in the soil. The background is a bright, hazy landscape with a sun flare.

Grounding Exercise



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CPAN





Crisis Numbers

If in immediate danger call **911**

EHN Crisis Line

915-779-1800

Toll Free Crisis Line

1-877-562-6467

Crisis Text Line

Text HOME to 741741

National Suicide Prevention Hotline

1-800-273-8255 (TALK)

Center Against Sexual and Family Violence Hope Line

915-593-7300



Resources

Stop, Think, Breathe

<https://my.life/>

Headspace

<https://www.headspace.com/health-covid-19>

Relaxation Room

<https://ccprelaxation.org/video-showcase/>