



# GRIEF & LOSS SUPPORT

If you haven't experienced it already, sometime in your life you will lose a friend, co-worker or loved one. Knowing what to expect in the grieving process will help you manage your emotions.

## The Faculty & Staff Counseling and Consultation Office (FASCCO) is here to help.

Grief will touch all of us at some time in our life. While there is no "right" way to grieve, the information below lists many of the ways grief might affect you. One may experience all the phases listed here or maybe just one or two. Whichever way it affects you, knowing what is happening (or may happen) during the grieving process may help you endure through that painful time.

**SHOCK** A common response to a loss is sometimes called shock. A numbness envelops you. It's your mind's way of cushioning the blow.

**DENIAL** Another response can be denial. Often this can be useful in the early days as it helps the mind/body adjust to the loss slowly. If denial persists, it can be difficult to move forward truly understanding and acknowledging the reality of your loss. It is important to move through denial to acknowledging your loss and its impact on your life.

**ANGER** Anger is also a normal response. You may have it in any degree from mild to raging, depending on your personality and the circumstances. You may even blame the one who died and be angry at the person for dying. Anger if felt, needs to be acknowledged.

**GUILT** Guilt can occur for a variety of reasons; it is blaming turned inward. Suicides can often leave us questioning ourselves and feeling guilty for missing signs and symptoms. Guilt is quite common and often found across the spectrum of death. We can blame ourselves for letting someone drive if death from an auto accident. The important aspect of guilt is to know it is common, but we cannot blame ourselves. We cannot control the choices or actions of others.

**DEPRESSION** When numbness wears off and rage has been exhausted, depression or sadness may arrive.

**TEARS** Some studies suggest that when we cry tears of emotion, we release toxins. Although there is not a consensus, it is important to understand that when we cry, it provides a helpful release from the intensity of grief. Tears are beneficial to men and women. Crying may not be your style of coping with loss, but crying should not be avoided because of embarrassment or societal expectations and norms. It really can be a healthy release.

**GROWTH** The old saying, "Time heals all wounds" is not accurate, but time does help us to adjust or adapt to loss. Every day you are moving towards healing, even when it feels like you are stalled. Growth occurs in spurts with periods of rest (or consolidation of growth) before new growth is presented. It is important to recognize if it feels like you are standing still, you are consolidating growth. Be easy on yourself. Self-care is critical.

### COPING STRATEGIES

- Talk about it
- Keep busy
- Take care of yourself
- Eat well
- Exercise
- Put guilty feelings in perspective
- Accept your emotions about the death
- Share with others who are also grieving
- Hold onto the good memories
- Get professional help if needed

### SPECIALTY GRIEF SUPPORT GROUPS AND RESOURCES

Contact FASCCO for the latest referral contact person for each group

- Bereaved children, adolescent or young adult support
- Caregiver's support
- Compassionate Friends (parents whose children have died)
- Hospice information
- \*Most non-profit hospices offer services to the community members regardless of hospice use and often for free or reduced rate*
- Major illness and physical loss support
- Widows and widowers' support
- Support for separated and divorced men and women



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