

GRIEF - A Normal & Natural Response to Loss

Because grief can be so painful and seem overwhelming, it frightens us. Many of us worry about whether we are grieving in a normal, healthy way. MOST PEOPLE who suffer a loss experience ONE or MORE of the following:

- Feel a tightness in the throat or heaviness in the chest.
- Have an empty feeling in the stomach and loss or gain of appetite.
- Feel restless and look for activity but have difficulty concentrating.
- Feel as though the loss isn't real, that it didn't actually happen (this may include trying to find the loved one).
- Sense the loved one's presence (may include expecting the person to walk in the door at the usual time, hearing his/her voice, seeing his/her face, sometimes in a crowd).
- Wander aimlessly and forget to finish things they've started to do around the house.
- Have difficulty sleeping, frequently have dreams or visions of the loved one.
- Assume mannerisms or traits of the loved one.
- Feel guilty or angry over things that happened or didn't happen in the relationship with the person who died.
- Feel intensely angry at the loved one for leaving him/her.
- Feel as though they need to take care of other people who seem uncomfortable around them by politely not talking about the person who died or their own feelings of loss.
- Need to tell and retell and remember things about the loved one and the experience of his/her death.
- Experience sudden mood changes over the slightest things or without explanation.
- Cry at unexpected times (it's important to cry and to talk with people when you need to).
- Feel despair at beginning a "new" life without the person who died
- Feel guilty about laughing or feeling happy.
- Experience an aching in the arms or a tenseness in the neck & shoulders.
- Feel like they can't go to the grocery store, church or group activities because people will look at or talk about them.
- It's okay to find a group of friends that you feel comfortable with.

THESE ARE ALL NATURAL & NORMAL GRIEF RESPONSES!!!