

I. Types of Grief Reactions

Important Facts to Remember Concerning Grief:

- A. There are characteristics of grief that can be identified but, there are no universal stages of grief as once believed.

The Traditional 5 Stages of Grief

1. Denial (This isn't *happening* to me!)
2. Anger (Why is this happening to *me*?)
3. Bargaining (I promise I'll be a better person *if...*)
4. Depression (I don't *care* anymore.)
5. Acceptance (*I'm ready* for whatever comes.)

Grief is not predictable. There are only individual pathways on the grief journey. That is, every person is different and experiences loss in diverse ways.

Grief is as individual as _____.

- B. The characteristic of our society is to avoid grief. Bereaved people want to run away from the pain and consequently avoid the healing process. It is better to learn about the grief process and how it will affect you.

S. Lewis wrote, "God _____ to us in our pleasures, _____ to us in our conscience, but _____ in our pains: It is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

- C. People will sometimes say, "Get over it!" But, you will never get over your grief. There are no words to alleviate the pain and time has nothing to do with the healing process. Instead, we must learn to cope with pain and live with loss.

If we allow ourselves to _____ adequately, we can heal and our lives can become even fuller and more meaningful than before.

Common Emotions Associated with Grief

- A. _____ You may feel like you have been dazed or stunned. Grief may wash over you like waves of feelings. Some people’s emotions are more muted outwardly.**
- B. _____ It has been described as being in the middle of a wild, rushing river and you cannot grab anything to hold on to. Fleeting glimpses of the deceased loved one across the room called “memory pictures” are possible.**
- C. _____ Some people may feel an acute and intense sense of anxiety about the reality that you must survive without the person who died. Various symptoms include restlessness, distress, distraction, and unreliable memory.**
- D. _____ You can express deep feelings of protest against the death by venting explosive emotions outwardly or by suppressing those feelings inwardly. Holding it in can contribute to your poor health and to becoming stuck in grief.**
- E. _____ It is natural to get caught up in the “if only’s.” Emotions are often not logical and the people around us may see our feelings as unreasonable.**
- F. _____ We are designed to have a slow progression of grief. Be patient while your body, soul, and spirit, goes through the grief process.**

Common Physical Symptoms of Grief

Normal physiological changes that are possible may include sleep disorders, lack of energy, and weight loss or gain. You may experience pain in your stomach, tightness in your throat or chest, heart palpitations, digestive problems, and headaches. Your immune system can be suppressed by the stress connected with grief.

Taken from “Afterwords, Helping Yourself Heal” by Dr. Alan Wolfelt