



grief

Most of us at some time in our lives will be faced with the death of someone we care deeply about.

Although each of us reacts to loss in different ways we have tried to describe some of the feelings and experiences most frequently felt by bereaved people.

If you recognise any of these feelings in yourself, we would like to reassure you that these, although often difficult to cope with, are very natural.

Grieving is the natural process of adapting to loss.

believing the reality of loss

At first you may feel numb, strangely calm and detached, or confused and unable to take in what has happened. For a while it may be impossible to believe that someone has died. It is quite common to think you can hear or see the dead person.

yearning

You may look for them in a crowd, listen for them when the phone rings, or see them in a favourite chair – even though you know they will not be there. At times you may have the feeling that you are searching for something but are never able to find it. You are not ‘going mad’, something very natural is happening.

disorganisation, emptiness and fear

This is often the longest part of grieving. You may feel that you no longer have a reason for living; nothing interests you; again you may feel that you are going ‘mad’. You are not. Perhaps you will feel guilty for the things you did or didn’t do.

Many bereaved people find themselves feeling angry – with God, family, friends, the hospital and medical staff, themselves or with the one who has died. It is not at all unusual to have difficulty in remembering, even simple everyday tasks.

Many people feel feelings of anxiety, helplessness, fear and tremendous loneliness during this time. You may well think that you will never feel better again.

health

It is quite natural to feel tired and be unable to sleep, eat or concentrate properly. You may begin to have pains you normally don’t have. For the most part these are things that happen to bereaved people but if they persist you should see your Doctor.

wanting to escape

You may feel that you could cope better if you moved house and disposed of the things that are reminders of the dead person. Bereavement **IS** painful. It is much better to make important decisions like moving house, when you are able to think more clearly and objectively. Try to avoid making decisions you might regret, until you feel stronger and more able to cope with life.

Dealing with grief

beginning to live again

In time you will become aware that you are beginning to have better hours and days. You will find that you can listen to that 'special' piece of music or remember something that you once shared with the one who has died without feeling so sad. Gradually you will begin to take up new interests and renew some of your old ones. At this time you may sometimes feel you are being disloyal to the person who has died but you should try to remember that, while the past will always be a part of you, there is a present and a future that you will be able to enjoy.

how can I help myself?

Grief is individual and each of us reacts to it differently. No one can completely understand what another person's grief is like but it is an experience most of us go through. If you find that you have feelings of guilt, panic, fear, anger or self-pity, or any others that seem alien to you, try not to hide them, they are part of your grief. It can often be helpful to share those feelings with someone who has some understanding and is willing to listen.

Further reading

There is a book which expands on this leaflet which you may find helpful, called "The Early Days of Grieving" by Derek Nuttall, published by Beaconsfield costing £2.50.

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