

What to grieve? - Trials/Stressful life events or times
1 Peter 1:6 - suffer grief in all kinds of trials

Relationships

1. Death of a parent
2. Death of a spouse
3. Unplanned pregnancy/abortion
4. Death of a child, miscarriage
5. Getting married
6. Divorce of parents
7. Divorce
8. Fathering/mothering a child
9. Jail sentence of family or friend
10. Marital separation of parents
11. Death of a sibling
12. Change in acceptance by peers
13. Marital separation
14. Death of a close family member
15. Death of a pet
16. Child with special needs
17. Moving or close friends/relatives moving
18. Feeling hurt, neglected, abused - not loved, appreciated, valued, worthy, safe, etc.
19. Not attaining love/approval of significant people
20. Becoming an empty-nester
21. Bullied
22. Adoption; finding out was adopted
23. Alcoholic/addicted parents
24. Difficulty with children, marriage, family, significant friendships
25. Loss of favorite teacher, boss, relationship
26. Handicapped, injury, ill, or challenged children
27. Suicide of friend/family member
28. Homicide of friend/family member
29. Abduction of friend/family member
30. Parents aging, losing health

Spiritual

1. Dreams/plans deferred/not achieved
2. Friends/family deciding no longer to be disciples
3. Changes in leadership, groups
4. Friends and family not becoming disciples
5. Death of a non-disciple

Emotional

1. Parents/friends not available emotionally
2. Parents angry or absent
3. Needs, wants, desires not met
4. Ideals in marriage and family
5. Abstract losses (intensity of love)

Professional

1. Imprisonment
2. Dismissal from work
3. Failures
4. Change in job
5. Retirement
6. Loss of identity/status/position

Financial

1. House fire
2. Financial challenges & reversals
3. Loss of home
4. Material losses

Wellness - state of being healthy in body and mind, especially as the result of deliberate effort

1. Acquiring a visible deformity
2. Personal injury or illness
3. Seasons of life
4. Not being who we wish we had been
5. Not getting what we want
6. Aging
7. Loss of health/strength
8. Loss of limbs or body parts
9. Loss of independence/functioning
10. Loss of generation (such as values)
11. War, terrorism & mass shootings
12. Politics
13. Natural disasters
14. Feelings of safety & security
15. Rape & sexual abuse
16. Combat fatalities
17. Birth defect
18. Burn victim

Additional

Any crisis, trauma, or significant event
Moving through the life cycle

How to process grief and loss

Get support

The single most important factor in healing from loss is having the support of other people. Even if you aren't comfortable talking about your feelings under normal circumstances, it's important to express them when you're grieving. Sharing your loss makes the burden of grief easier to carry. Wherever the support comes from, accept it and **do not grieve alone**. Connecting to others will help you heal.

Finding support after a loss

- **Turn to friends and family members** – Now is the time to lean on the people who care about you, even if you take pride in being strong and self-sufficient. Draw loved ones close, rather than avoiding them, and accept the assistance that's offered. Oftentimes, people want to help but don't know how, so tell them what you need—whether it's a shoulder to cry on or help with funeral arrangements.
- **Draw comfort from your faith** – If you follow a religious tradition, embrace the comfort its mourning rituals can provide. Spiritual activities that are meaningful to you—such as praying, meditating, or going to church—can offer solace. If you're questioning your faith in the wake of the loss, talk to a clergy member or others in your religious community.
- **Join a support group** – Grief can feel very lonely, even when you have loved ones around. Sharing your sorrow with others who have experienced similar losses can help. To find a bereavement support group in your area, contact local hospitals, hospices, funeral homes, and counseling centers.
- **Talk to a therapist or grief counselor** – If your grief feels like too much to bear, call a mental health professional with experience in grief counseling. An experienced therapist can help you work through intense emotions and overcome obstacles to your grieving.

Take care of yourself

When you're grieving, it's more important than ever to take care of yourself. The stress of a major loss can quickly deplete your energy and emotional reserves. Looking after your physical and emotional needs will help you get through this difficult time.

- **Face your feelings.** You can try to suppress your grief, but you can't avoid it forever. In order to heal, you have to acknowledge the pain. Trying to avoid feelings of sadness and loss only prolongs the grieving process. Unresolved grief can also lead to complications such as depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and health problems.
- **Express your feelings in a tangible or creative way.** Write about your loss in a journal. If you've lost a loved one, write a letter saying the things you never got to say; make a scrapbook or photo album celebrating the person's life; or get involved in a cause or organization that was important to him or her.
- **Look after your physical health.** The mind and body are connected. When you feel good physically, you'll also feel better emotionally. Combat stress and fatigue by getting enough sleep, eating right, and exercising. Don't use alcohol or drugs to numb the pain of grief or lift your mood artificially.
- **Don't let anyone tell you how to feel, and don't tell yourself how to feel either.** Your grief is your own, and no one else can tell you when it's time to "move on" or "get over it." Let yourself feel whatever you feel without embarrassment or judgment. It's okay to be angry, to yell at the heavens, to cry or not to cry. It's also okay to laugh, to find moments of joy, and to let go when you're ready.
- **Plan ahead for grief "triggers."** Anniversaries, holidays, and milestones can reawaken memories and feelings. Be prepared for an emotional wallop, and know that it's completely normal. If you're sharing a holiday or lifecycle event with other relatives, talk to them ahead of time about their expectations and agree on strategies to honor the person you loved.

<http://www.helpguide.org/articles/grief-loss/coping-with-grief-and-loss.htm>

Please see <http://www.helpguide.org/articles/grief-loss/supporting-a-grieving-person.htm>
for how to **support a grieving person**.

Types of Grief

Anticipatory Grief

As its name suggests, ‘Anticipatory Grief’ is the reaction to a death you were able to anticipate such as when an individual dies from a long term illness. As soon as you accept and understand someone you love is going to die, you begin grieving.

Grief that occurs preceding a loss can be confusing, as you may feel conflicted or guilty for experiencing grief reactions about someone who is still here. You may experience anger, loss of emotional control, and helplessness. You may also feel grief over the loss of things other than the individual, such as loss of hopes and dreams for the future and the loss associated with a changing roles and family structures.

‘Anticipatory Grief’ is different than the grief response felt after a death and does not necessarily make the later any easier. However, it can allow those who love the individual to slowly and gradually prepare for and absorb the reality of the loss. Also, for some but not all, it allows for meaningful time spent with the individual leading to a *sense* of closure and peace.

Complicated Grief

Refers to grief reactions and feelings of loss that are debilitating, long lasting, and/or impair your ability to engage in daily activities. Other types of grief such as ‘Chronic Grief’, ‘Delayed Grief’, and ‘Distorted Grief’ all fall under the blanket of ‘Complicated Grief’.

Please see a professional/licensed counselor if/when experiencing complicated grief.

Although the concept of ‘Complicated Grief’ is well known and generally accepted, it’s not without its detractors. There are some who believe ‘Complicated Grief’ is simply the manifestation of grief reactions combined with other mental disorders such as Depression and Anxiety.

Chronic Grief

Strong grief reactions that do not subside and last over a long period of time. Continually experiencing extreme distress over the loss with no progress towards feeling better or improving functioning.

Delayed Grief

When grief symptoms and reactions aren’t experienced until long after a person’s death or a much later time than is typical. The griever, who consciously or subconsciously avoids the reality and pain of the loss, suppresses these reactions.

Distorted Grief

Extreme, intense, or atypical reactions to a loss – odd changes in behavior and self-destructive actions. Anger and hostility towards oneself or others are common.

Cumulative Grief

When one experiences a second loss while still grieving a first loss. This is also referred to as “bereavement overload” or “grief overload”.

Prolonged Grief

(Similar to ‘Chronic Grief’) Grief reactions that are prolonged and intense. The griever is incapacitated by grief and daily function is impaired on a long-term basis. The griever spends much time contemplating the death, longing for reunion, and is unable to adjust to life without the individual.

Exaggerated Grief

An overwhelming intensification of normal grief reactions that may worsen over time. Characterized by extreme and excessive grief reactions possibly to include nightmares, self-destructive behaviors, drug abuse, thoughts of suicide, abnormal fears, and the development or emergence of psychiatric disorders. **Please see a professional/licensed counselor.**

Secondary Loss

When a loss impacts many areas of one's life, creating multiple losses stemming from the "primary loss". Though it is easy to think our grief is solely the grief of losing the person who died, our grief is also the pain of the other losses caused as a result of this death.

Masked Grief

Grief reactions that impair normal functioning however the individual is unable to recognize these symptoms and behaviors are related to the loss. Symptoms are often masked as either physical symptoms or other maladaptive behaviors.

Disenfranchised Grief

One's grief is 'disenfranchised' when their culture, society, or support group, make them feel their loss and/or grief is invalidated and insignificant. This can occur when the death is stigmatized (suicide, overdose, HIV/AIDS, drunk driving), the relationship is seen as insignificant (ex-spouse, co-worker, miscarriage, pet), the relationship is stigmatized by society (same-sex partner, gang member, partner from an extramarital affair), the loss is not a death (Dementia, Traumatic Brain Injury, Mental Illness, Substance Abuse).

Traumatic Grief

Normal grief responses experienced in combination with traumatic distress suffered as a result of a loved one dying in a way perceived to be frightening, horrifying, unexpected, violent and/or traumatic. Distress is extreme enough to impair daily functioning.

Collective Grief

Grief felt by a collective group such as a community, society, village, or nation as a result of an event such as a war, natural disaster, terrorist attack, death of a public figure, or any other event leading to mass casualties or national tragedy.

Ambiguous Loss

Losses that lack clarity and can lead to different views of who or what has been lost. Individuals and those around them may question whether a loss has occurred or if this is a loss that should validate deep emotional responses (such as with disenfranchised deaths).

Inhibited Grief

Occurs when an individual shows no outward signs of grief for an extended period of time. The individual inhibits their grief, eventually leading to physical manifestations and somatic complaints.

Abbreviated Grief

A short-lived grief response. The grieving process often seems shorter because the role of the deceased is immediately filled by someone/something else, because there was little attachment to the deceased, and/or the individual is able to accept and integrate the loss quickly due to 'Anticipatory Grief'. For example, the replacement of the deceased such as with a remarriage or any activity to "fast track" to end your grief.

Absent Grief

This is when the bereaved shows absolutely no signs of grief and acts as though nothing has happened. Characterized by complete shock or denial, especially in the face of a sudden loss. This becomes concerning when it goes on for an extended period of time. This does not account for differences in how we grieve and it's important to note that just because you can't tell someone is grieving doesn't mean they aren't.

<http://www.whatsyourgrief.com/types-of-grief/>

Processing Grief – a few reflection questions

Anything that continually allows the person to avoid or suppress this pain can be expected to prolong the course of mourning.”

Bereavement Studies of Grief in Adult Life, C. M. Parkes (1972)

1. What thoughts do I have about the situation?
2. Identify thoughts and feelings associated with the grief experience. If not able to identify feelings, Google search feelings words.
3. How have your feelings changed? What feelings do you still have and how are they affecting you?
4. Share with someone supportive/informed about grief your thoughts and feelings about the situation.
5. What feeling made the greatest impression on you? When have you felt this way? Describe the situation. Any of those thoughts/feelings still concern you?
6. What's the relationship between my grief and how I feel about myself?
7. What thoughts and feelings do I have related to my own worth?
8. Have I attempted to idealize or the situation or person I'm grieving?
9. What role/value did this situation/person play in my life? How will my life change?
10. I'm sorry that....
11. If only I had been able to....
12. I'm still upset about...
13. I wish....
14. The thing(s) I didn't understand was...
15. What makes moving forward more difficult?
16. How can I "say farewell" to the situation or person? What is a good "leave-taking"/closure activity?
17. What ownership, if any, do I need to take regarding this situation/person?
18. What scares me most?
19. How am I experiencing the stages of grief?
20. What do you think were the reasons for your anger? How did you express it? "Grief is like mental nausea, throwing up emotionally".... Write out feelings and burn/throw them away.
21. What has been said to you that has not been helpful? What are people doing that upsets you?
22. How can I connect to God during this time of grief?
23. Which scriptures are helpful?
24. What hope can I cling to during this time (1 Peter 1 &...) of grief?
25. What can I research to better understand my situation?
26. What have I learned about crises?
27. What can I do to help others on a crisis?#

