

Handling Grief



There are four basic stages of grief: avoidance, resentment, depression and acceptance.

1. Avoidance

The first stage of grief is avoidance when a person pretends that they have accepted the situation and are continuing on with their life, as they knew before. It is at this stage when people resolve that they do not want to waste any time feeling sorry for him or her or feeling bad and desperately try to portray these feelings to others. People often react by cooperating with the grieving individual and not discussing the person who has died.

2. Resentment

During the resentment stage, reality begins to set in for the griever. The griever will feel very angry about the loss and begin to wonder if they will ever enjoy their life again.

3. Depression

Depression comes at different times for individuals. It could be within weeks of the loss up to many months after. It is during this stage that there is a full realization of the loss. Often the griever will experience a loss of motivation and energy for most things around them. The depression will peak and then slowly recover but even as it begins to lift, the griever can have feelings of being indifferent, almost detached. The intense emotional pain will have passed.

4. Acceptance of the Loss

The final stage of grieving sees the griever as slowly regaining the energy for living and beginning to return to their life. The griever can now think of the person who has died without falling apart. The griever often has a new perspective on the death, one of strength and inspiration.

The following suggestions come from individuals who have been through a loss:

- Respect the individual's own grieving stages, we are all different and we will grieve on our own timetable.
- Communicate your feelings and thoughts through family, friends, journals etc. as this helps to relieve emotional and mental pressures.
- Maintain good health and get enough sleep.
- Acknowledge your pain and release it in ways that come natural to you.
- Trust your healing process, it takes time but you will recover.

If you want to help someone who is going through the grieving process, here are a few suggestions:

- Be honest with the griever and share your feelings in a sensitive way.
- Be empathetic to the griever. Try to understand what they are going through. It is ok to ask questions if it will help you to understand them better.
- Be an effective listener and don't give advice unless asked for.
- Respect the griever for their actions and decisions.
- Help out the griever with daily tasks such as buying groceries, preparing meals, doing the laundry and keeping the house clean. Your help will be appreciated.