

Grief & Loss: Ways to Cope

Grieving the loss of a close friend, co-worker or family member is difficult. Although each of us may experience a wide range of emotions at varying times, it is normal to eventually move through three stages of grief. The following information can assist with knowing what to expect and ways to cope.

Stage I: Shock, Denial & Disbelief

During this stage, your emotional defense system is at work. It's normal to feel shock, denial, and disbelief. This phase may last for days or weeks. Talk about your experience and feelings to begin the process of coping.

Stage II: Feelings

This is the most challenging stage, involving a range of emotions such as sadness, depression, anger, loneliness, anxiety, and sometimes relief. Rationalization, bargaining, or reverting to shock may also occur. Try not to isolate yourself and communicate your needs to others.

Stage III: Acceptance and Resolution

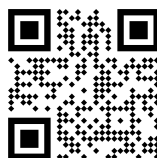
In this final stage, take steps to honor your loved one with words and deeds that would honor their memory while embracing new energy and optimism. Try to accept the past and look toward new possibilities. Seek emotional support and accountability to move forward.

Practical Ways to Cope:

- Keep decision-making to a minimum.
- Allow support from family and friends.
- Avoid mood-altering substances.
- Prioritize exercise, a healthy diet, and rest.
- Practice meditation, prayer, or contemplation.
- Be gentle with yourself.
- Take inventory of the positive aspects.
- Seek professional help if thoughts of harm to self or others are present or as necessary.



REACH counselors are available to provide further assistance and referrals for grief and loss related concerns. Services are available for employees and household dependents and all information by law is strictly confidential.



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