

# Grieving a Loss

## *What To Expect And How To Cope*

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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 how to cope.

### Stage I - Shock, Denial & Disbelief

Much of this stage is our emotional defense system at work, protecting us from feelings that will soon start after the shock has taken its course. This stage can often last for days, even weeks. As uncomfortable as it may be, begin talking about what you are experiencing and how you are starting to feel.

### Stage II - Feelings

This is perhaps the most difficult stage to go through. A wide range of emotions may be experienced such as: sadness, depression, anger, loneliness, anxiety, and sometimes relief. Thoughts of rationalizing, bargaining, or reverting back into shock also may be a part of this stage. It is important not to isolate, but let others know what you need from them. Seek professional help if there are thoughts of hurting yourself or others. The more you begin to talk out your feelings the easier it will become to focus and begin to move on.

### Stage III - Acceptance & Resolution

This final stage is associated with a new energy and optimism of accepting the past, finding closure and starting anew. Allow yourself to get needed support and accountability to move on toward new possibilities.

### Practical Coping Tips:

- ✓ Keep decision making to a minimum
  - ✓ Allow support from family and friends
  - ✓ Do not use mood altering substances
  - ✓ Make exercise, healthy diet, and rest a priority
  - ✓ Meditate, pray, contemplate
  - ✓ Be gentle with yourself
  - ✓ Take inventory of the good
  - ✓ Seek professional support if needed
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