

As Life Goes On

Mending the Heart

SOCIAL

- More interest in daily affairs of self/others
- Ability to reach out and meet others
- Energy for social visits and events

PHYSICAL

- Physical symptoms subside
- Sleep pattern and appetites are more settled
- Gut-wrenching emptiness lightens

EMOTIONAL

- Emotions are less intense
- Feeling of coming out of the fog
- More peace; less guilt

MENTAL

- Increased perspective about the death
- Ability to remember with less pain
- Improved concentration and memory
- Dreams and nightmares decrease

SPIRITUAL

- Reconnection with religious/spiritual beliefs
- Life has new meaning and purpose
- Acceptance of death as part of the life cycle

What helps

- To reflect on progress since the death
- To begin envisioning a future
- To engage in new activities
- To establish new roles and relationships

Our programs are supported by:

*United Way of the Lower Mainland
The BC Bereavement Hotline
HEP Hospice Enhancement Program
Northern Health and the Province of BC*



**For bereavement support in your area,
call the BC Bereavement Helpline at
1-877-779-2223
or contact
Terrace Regional Hospice Network
#207-4650 Lazelle Av.
Terrace BC V8G 1S6
250-635-4811**



Dealing with Grief:

A Guide to Understanding Your Reactions



***We have chosen the image of
the Labyrinth as a metaphor for
the journey through grief.***

***A labyrinth is not a maze
as there are no dead ends
and no wrong turnings.***

There is only one way - forward.

So it is with grief.

***The only way through is
forward, with many turns and
going back and forth over
what seems like the same territory.
We journey to the center of our grief,
to the centre of ourselves,
and then slowly
return to re-enter the world.***

***As you journey through your own
grief process, there will likely be
unexpected turns and insights.***

Dealing With Grief:

*A Guide to Understanding
Your Reactions*

When someone important to you dies, you grieve. This means that you may experience a wide range of responses, often over an extended period of time. The following three sections generally coincide with early, middle and later grief, though variation and overlap of these phases is common.

When a death occurs

As you accept the fact of the death of someone important, you will feel shock, numbness and disbelief that this has happened. Panic and strong physical and emotional reactions are common.

Adjusting to loss

Later, as the numbness subsides, you will deal with what this loss means to you and the emotional pain of grieving. The intensity of the feeling may surprise or frighten you, but it is natural and can be resolved as you move through it.

As life goes on

As you adjust to life without the person who died, you will begin to re-establish connections with the world around you. You have more energy for family and friends, work and other interests.

Grief may be somewhat familiar, or it may be a new, uncertain endeavor. It is not an easy journey and there may be times when you want more support than is available through your social network.

The Grief Journey: When a Death Occurs

Walking the Edges

SOCIAL

- Withdrawal from others
- Unrealistic expectations of self and others
- Poor judgment about relationships

PHYSICAL

- Shortness of breath and palpitations
- Digestive upsets
- Low energy, weakness and restlessness

EMOTIONAL

- Crying, sobbing and wailing
- Indifference and emptiness
- Outrage and helplessness

MENTAL

- Confusion, forgetfulness and poor concentration
- Denial and daydreaming
- Constant thoughts about the person who died and/or the death

SPIRITUAL

- Blaming God or life
- Lack of meaning, direction or hope
- Wanting to die or join the person who died

What helps

- To pace yourself moment to moment
- To make no unnecessary changes
- To talk about the person and the death
- To use practical and emotional supports

Adjusting to Loss

Entering the Depths

SOCIAL

- Rushing into new relationships
- Wanting company but unable to ask
- Continued withdrawal and isolation
- Self-consciousness

PHYSICAL

- Changes in appetite and sleep patterns
- Shortness of breath and palpitations
- Digestive upsets

EMOTIONAL

- Intense and conflicting emotions
- Magnified fear for self or others
- Anger, sadness, guilt, depression

MENTAL

- Sense of going crazy
- Memory problems
- Difficulty concentrating/understanding
- Vivid dreams or nightmares

SPIRITUAL

- Trying to contact the person who died
- Sensing the presence of the person who died; visitations
- Continued lack of meaning

What helps

- To recognize and express emotions
- To acknowledge changes
- To understand grief and know others experience a similar response