

Coping with Grief & Loss

Losing someone that you love is very painful. There will be many confused feelings and reactions; there is not a right or wrong way to grieve. However there are healthy ways to cope with the pain. Grief is a natural response to pain and loss. It is the emotional suffering you feel when a loved one dies. Everyone deals with this loss differently; where one person may grieve for a few weeks, another may grieve for years or indefinitely.

In 1969, psychiatrist Elisabeth Kubler-Ross stated the main 5 stages of grief that a person may go through after the death of a loved one, or major illness diagnosis, or any other type of loss:

- Denial: "This can't be happening to me."
- Anger: "Why is this happening to me?"
- Bargaining: "Make this not happen, and in return I will _____"
- Depression: "I am too sad to do anything."
- Acceptance: "I am at peace with what happened."

Having all or some of these emotions during the grief and loss process is normal. You do not have to go through all the stages, to be considered grieving "the right way." In fact, some people resolve their grief without going through any of the above stages. The way people grieve, according to Kubler-Ross in 2004, is individual, like anything else.

Some people experience symptoms of grief which may include:

- Shock and disbelief
- Sadness
- Guilt
- Anger
- Fear
- Physical Symptoms

10 tips to cope with grief and loss

1. Turn to friends and family members for support.
2. Get comfort from your own faith.
3. Join a support group.
4. Seek professional help in the form of a therapist or counselor.
5. Face your own feelings of grief and loss.
6. Express your feeling in keeping a journal, artwork, or even starting a blog about the experience and/or your feelings.
7. Take care of your physical health.
8. Find support after a loss.
9. Don't let anyone else tell you how should feel or grief, or explain away your sadness.
10. Plan ahead for events, or dates that may trigger onset sadness, such as an anniversary, birthday, or holiday events. Find support ahead of time, and surround yourself with empathetic people.

It is normal to feel sad for numb after a loss, but as time passes, these feelings and emotions, should become less intense, and you accept the loss, and make a commitment to move forward.