



COMMON GRIEF REACTIONS

The symptoms below are expected during bereavement. Each person will experience a unique blend of some or all of the symptoms and perhaps some that are not listed.

BEHAVIORS

- Crying (sometimes unexpectedly)
- Searching for the deceased
- Carrying special objects
- Going to gravesite
- Making and keeping an altar
- Keeping belongings intact
- Looking at photos or videos
- Listening to recordings
- Talking to the deceased
- Avoiding situations that arouse grief
- Changes in daily routine
- “Staying busy”
- Assuming mannerisms of the deceased

EMOTIONAL

- Shock, numbness
- Emptiness
- Sadness
- Sorrow for the one who died
- Loneliness, longing, yearning
- Anger
- Guilt, regret
- Resentment
- “More I should have done”
- Fear, anxiety, insecurity
- Feeling helpless, out of control
- Diminished self-concern
- “Don’t care,” “What does it matter”
- Depression
- Desire to join the deceased
- Suicidal feelings
- Feelings of betrayal, disloyalty
- “Emotional roller coaster”
- Relief

MENTAL

- Disbelief
- Confusion
- Disorientation
- Absentmindedness
- Forgetfulness
- Poor Concentration
- Distraction
- Difficulty focusing and attending
- Low Motivation
- Expecting to see the deceased
- Expecting the deceased to call
- Preoccupation with the deceased
- Need to tell and retell story
- Dreams or images of the deceased
- Denial
- Thinking about other deaths and losses

PHYSICAL

- Pain
- Fatigue, Exhaustion, Low Energy
- Sleep disruption
- Appetite disruption
- Shortness of breath
- Tight or heavy feeling in chest
- Feeling of tightness in throat
- Hollow feeling in stomach
- Stomach pain and upset
- Heartache, broken heart
- Dry mouth
- Tension
- Restlessness, irritability
- Increased sensitivity to stimuli
- “Grief Attacks
- “Sympathy pains”

SOCIAL

- Being isolated by Others
- Withdrawing from social activities
- Diminished desire for conversation
- Being “widowed”, “single,” etc.
- Hide grief to “take care of others”
- Lose friends, make new friends
- Redefining oneself

SPIRITUAL

- Questions about God:
 - Why would God allow this?
- Questions about the deceased:
 - Where are they now?
 - Are they okay?
 - Can they see me?
 - Will I see them again?
 - What will happen when I die?
- Sensing the deceased’s presence
- Hearing, smelling, or seeing the deceased
- Death affirms or challenges beliefs
- Awe, wonder, mystery
- Continuing relationship with the deceased

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