



All of us, during our lifetime, will experience the death of a loved one or friend which will affect us for the rest of our lives. Following the death of a loved one or a friend, a period of grief normally follows. Grief is probably one of the most personal experiences we will have in our lifetime - for each person's experience of grief is unique - there is no one kind of grief, and there is certainly no right kind. However, there are some common elements to grief that we all share, which enables us to help ourselves, get help from others, recover from grief and move on.



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## WHAT IS GRIEF

Grief is the combination of sorrow, strong emotions and the resulting confusion that comes from losing someone dear to us. Not only do we mourn loss of that person but we mourn for ourselves as well. It is an adjustment process which allows us gradually to come to terms with our loss. This normal process of grieving often takes place in stages. Different emotions experienced during different stages of this process. The stages of grieving are different for each person. Not everyone experiences the same feelings or stages, nor with the same intensity. The stages do not necessary occur in any particular order nor is there a correct time period for this process.

## WHAT DOES GRIEF FEEL LIKE

Grief can feel like many things. During the first few hours up to the period of several days following the death, it is very common to experience feelings of numbness, shock, disbelief as well as a sense of unreality.

Grief can be physical. Many people feel a physical sense of loss and even physical pain. Physical reactions may include the heaviness or pain in the chest, difficult in breathing, a loss of appetite or over eating, a feeling that nothing is real, lack of energy and have trouble sleeping.

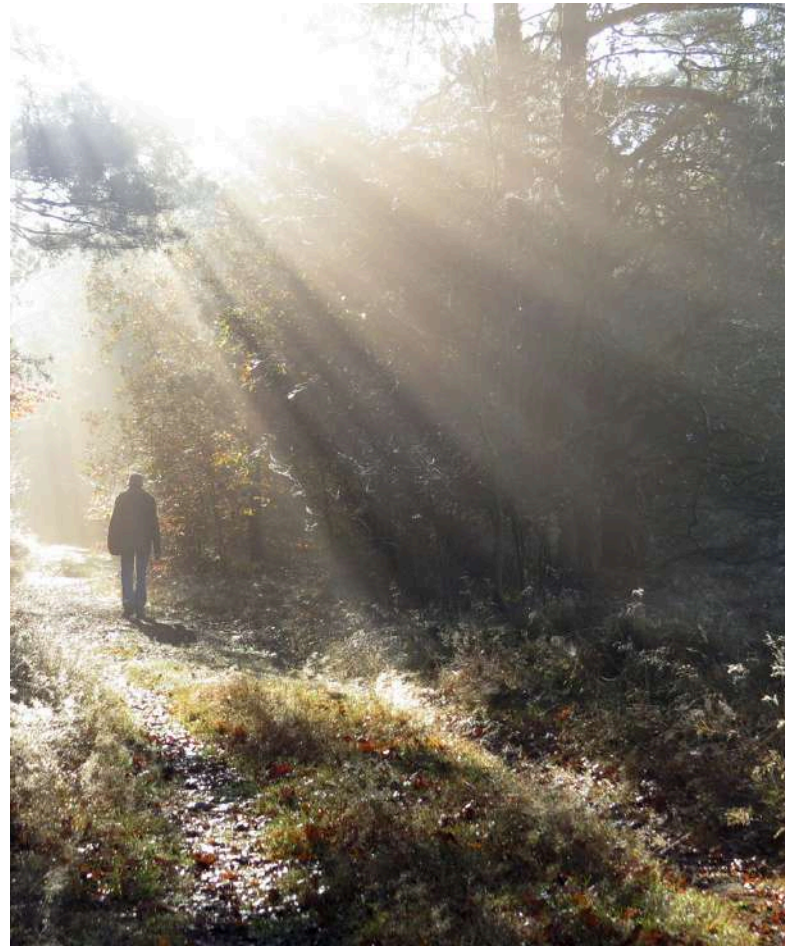
Grief can be overwhelming at times. It is very common to become preoccupied with thoughts of our loved ones, to dream about them, suddenly feel overwhelmed by the pain of the loss who even feel they're still alive and with us.

Grief brings uncertainties. Questioning what we're doing with our lives, being disinterested in our normal activities, other relationships and feeling suddenly angry or sullen with others are all normal reactions to the loss of a loved one

## STRONG EMOTIONS

Part of the grieving process involves a period of intense emotions which we must allow ourselves to experience. Some of these emotions are:-

- **Anger** is a common emotion following a death of a loved one. The anger may be aimed at complete strangers, friends, family who even at a situation. Anger may be directed at our deceased loved one even though rationally we know that they are not to be blamed. However emotionally we may resent them for deserting us and causing us to suffer terrible loneliness.
- **Guilt** is another common emotion following the death of a loved one. We may feel guilty for all the things left unsaid or undone as we now realise that it is too late to do anything. We may also be haunted with thoughts of what we didn't do to save the person.
- **Depression** or feeling of isolation or loneliness.
- **Denial**, a process of not allowing feelings to come to the surface
- **Fear**, not understanding the grieving process.
- **Sadness**, overwhelming sense of loss.
- **Anxiety**, an inability to concentrate which can become so severe that one cannot function.
- **Relief**, cause of the end of suffering the loved one has endured.
- **Longing**, a sense of wanting everything to return to what it had been.



## COPING WITH GRIEF

there are many things we can do to help ourselves to cope with grief. Some of them seem obvious but they are important to remember.

- Remember that experience of grief, however difficult is normal. Don't avoid it or try to make it go away. Everyone needs to grieve.
- Accept and acknowledge your feelings.
- Be prepared to have good and bad days.
- Maintain normal routine which will help you to focus on things in addition to your grief.
- Avoid taking on more stress at this difficult time and postpone things (Like major life decisions) until you feel ready to face them.
- Try to maintain your own physical and mental health.
- Your beliefs and faith may offer strength and inspirations during this difficult time.
- Respect your own grief process and timetable.
- There is no one right way to grieve and no specific time to resolve it and is different for everyone.
- Never apologise for crying over the death of a loved one.
- Share your sorrow and talk about your loss with family and friends.

## GRIEVING PROCESS IN CHILDREN

It is natural to want to protect our children from painful experiences. However it is best to prepare our children with honest simple explanation as they too will be affected in some way by a death in the family. Children do grieve, often very deeply in experience many of the same emotions as adults, so support their grief by acknowledging their pain and sharing thoughts and tears with them.

The time it takes to progress through grieving is unique to each person. Grief takes time and although at times may feel that we will never get past it, we will. The pain of grief does not lessen or change over time. The sayings, "it will take time" and "time heals all wounds" are appropriate to a certain degree. In reality, we never get over the death of a loved one, what happens is that we learn to live with this heart-breaking sorrow.

***"We never lose the ones we love for even though they're gone within our hearts all those who care their memory lingers on"***

Many people have the need for religious services other rituals which promote the grieving process and also provide social support and allow the death to be validated. Different cultures have different rituals. In our culture following the death of a loved one it is our custom to hold a sadadi. Sadadi's Provide an opportunity for family and friends to support each other to pay our last respects to the deceased person. Sadadi's And the funeral itself another associated religious ceremonies can help in the grieving process.

