



INTEGRATION

In this part of the grief process, you *accept* that the loss occurred - that the person will never come back again. You won't forget them and memories are treasured.

Waves of intensity and pain become farther apart and people begin to live life again.

On special occasions or holidays it may be difficult but it is helpful to remember someone who you wish was still with you.

It may take months or years, depending on the relationship you will be feeling that it is okay to get back into activities that you once enjoyed before and go on with your life. Sometimes people feel guilty at this stage for going on with life. It's okay to laugh and have fun. It doesn't mean that you'll forget the person or that you love them less.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- *Grieving is different for everyone.* Two friends might be grieving the death of a mutual friend but each will deal with it in his/her own way.
- *You don't have to be a person's best friend/family to feel the pain of grief of death.* You may be reminded of other losses in your life.
- *Allow yourself time to grieve and heal.* In time, the pain will lessen and the memories will remain.

INSPIRATIONAL THOUGHTS

- *3 Things to Remember About Loss:*
 - *I will not always feel as I do now.*
 - *I am doing okay. Grief will not hurt me.*
 - *I will make it through my loss as others have made it through theirs.*
- *Tears are a sign of healing, not weakness.*
- *Tears have a language all their own and express feelings that have no words.*
- *The way out of grief is through it.*
- *Effective grief work is not done alone - find a friend*
- *Cry when you want to. Laugh when you can.*
- *Memories are yesterday's gifts to the heart.*

WHERE TO GET HELP

Sometimes we need others to help us deal with grief. Some resources that can help:

- *Family, friends, teachers*
- *Ministers or ministerial counsellors*
- *Bereavement Counsellor or Group*
- *Mental Health Services*
 - *Peace River 624-6151*
 - *High Prairie - 523-6490*
 - *Fairview - 835-6149*
- *24 Hour Mental Health Help Line - 1-877-303-2642*

GRIEF & LOSS



INFORMATION FOR TEENS & ADULTS

Developed By
Crisis Response & Suicide Prevention Program
Peace River Mental Health Services
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WHAT IS GRIEF?

Grief is a natural healing process of the mind and body after a loss of someone or something close to you.

The grieving that you do when you lose someone through moving away, divorce or separation, illness or death is much stronger than grief over small losses and can last a longer time.

Grief is expressed in 4 ways:

- **Feelings**- such as pain and sadness
- **Physical Sensations** - such as crying, sighing, tiredness
- **Thoughts** - about the loss and what has been lost
- **Behaviors** - searching, pining, talking about the loss

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

There are many physical symptoms that may accompany grief:

- trouble sleeping
- upset stomach and nausea
- headaches
- dizziness and blurred vision
- pain in the chest
- dry mouth and tight throat
- loss of appetite
- loss or gain of weight
- diarrhea or constipation
- aches and pains you never had before

CYCLES OF GRIEF

The grieving process is made of many feelings, tasks, and cycles. Generally, there are 3 interwoven cycles that people go through:

- **AVOIDANCE**
- **CONFRONTATION**
- **INTEGRATION**



AVOIDANCE

When you experience a loss, the first reactions are usually

- **Shock**
- **Denial**
- **Numbness**

These feelings are natural and allow you to accept the loss, slowly at first.

Some people feel numbness for a couple of weeks.

When the shock starts to wear off, you may appear to deny the loss happened

- **"This can't be real"**

Denial is normal and useful. Disbelief is common and a need to know why the loss occurred may appear.

People at this stage may seem confused and disorganized - like a zombie or robot. In the case of death, people find that the funeral helps to make the death seem real, that it is easier to accept after the funeral.



CONFRONTATION

Confrontation is usually the most intense cycle of the grief process.

The shock has worn off enough for the person to experience the *pain*.

The pain often feels constant because the waves are occurring close together.

Great extremes of emotion are common and includes a wide range of responses including:

- **Anger**
- **Guilt**
- **Depression**
- **Despair**
- **Deep sadness**
- **Hurt**
- **Nervousness**
- **Restlessness**
- **Exhaustion**
- **Feeling Regrets**
- **Missing them**
- **Confused**
- **Acute Grief**
- **Loneliness**
- **Anxiety**
- **Self-blame**
- **Loss of interest**
- **Emptiness**

It is common at this stage to feel that dying would be better than living with the pain of grief. It feels out of control but the feelings are normal. **If you are concerned about someone hurting themselves because the pain is too great - GET HELP.**

It is important to let your feelings out:

- Write in a journal.
- Write a letter to the person saying the things you didn't get a chance to
- Draw a picture of them
- Turn to your family and friends for support
- Talk to someone