

CASCADE HEALTH SOLUTIONS HOSPICE

Support for Grieving and Bereavement

The loss or absence of someone or something you love is very painful. Giving attention to this painful process and our needs at this time is important. Learning to work through the grieving process and allowing yourself to feel what you feel is necessary for healing.

What is grief?

Grief is a natural response to loss. It's the complex response we experience when something or someone we love, are accustomed/attached to, or value is altered, lost or removed. Grief can impact one's self in variety of ways: emotionally, physically, spiritually, socially, and cognitively (or a combination of these).

Grief is around us more than we realize. Realizing that we have coped with other losses may guide and help us through the loss of a loved one through death. Other losses in life include:

- A relationship breakup
- Loss of health
- Losing a job
- Loss of financial stability
- Loss of possessions through fire or natural disaster
- Death of a pet
- Loss of a cherished dream
- A loved one's serious illness
- Loss of a friendship
- Loss of safety after a trauma

Coping with Grief--Common Feelings and Emotions

These are some common symptoms people feel as they go through the grieving process. Not everyone experiences the same thing, and what each person feels and experiences will be as unique as the individual person. Yet, not only are we different in how we grieve from one another, but each loss can be experienced differently as well: "as unique as snowflakes and fingerprints."

- aches & pains (may be similar to deceased)
- anger (at self, others or at God); irritability
- anxiety
- bargaining with God
- comparing the loss to the losses of others
- confusion
- depression
- disbelief
- disinterest in life
- distorted or lost time
- disturbed sleep, insomnia
- easily distracted
- feeling disconnected from family & friends
- feelings of being stuck in a rut
- feelings of "falling apart"
- feelings of hopelessness
- feeling that nothing matters or has meaning
- guilt
- inability/unwillingness to make decisions
- embarrassment about emotions/ feelings
- erratic appetite
- exhaustion, fatigue
- feeling out of control, overwhelmed
- feeling panic

Everyone grieves differently

Grieving is a personal and highly individual experience. **There is no “normal” timetable for grieving.** Some people start to feel better in weeks or months, others may take much longer. Whatever your grief experience, it’s important to be patient with yourself and allow the process to naturally unfold.

Some *Myths* About Grief:

MYTH: The pain will go away faster if you ignore it.

MYTH: It’s important to be “be strong” in the face of loss.

MYTH: If you don’t cry, it means you aren’t sad about the loss. If you do cry, it means you lack faith or don’t appreciate what you had.

MYTH: Grief should last about a year.

MYTH: One should move away from grief, not towards it.

MYTH: The goal is to get over your grief as soon as possible.

Many people worry if they are grieving in the ‘right’ way and wonder if the feelings they have are ‘normal.’ Most people who suffer a loss experience one or more of the following:

- Crying at unexpected times
- Feeling a tightness in the throat or heaviness in the chest
- A need to tell, retell and remember things about their loved one and the experience of their death
- Aimless wandering, forgetfulness, inability to finish things you’ve started.
- Restlessness and a need for activity accompanied by an inability to concentrate
- An empty feeling in your stomach and loss of appetite.
- Difficulty sleeping, frequent dreams about your loved one.
- A feeling that the loss isn’t real, that it didn’t actually happen.
- Reassessing the relationships and feeling guilt or anger over things that happened or didn’t happen; things that were said or unsaid.
- A tendency to assume the mannerisms or traits of your loved one, perhaps temporarily identifying with symptoms of your loved one’s illness.
- A sense of your loved one’s presence: expecting the person to walk in the door, hearing his/her voice or seeing her/his face.
- Feelings of guilt, and anger—even anger at your loved one for leaving you.
- A need to take care of other people who seem uncomfortable around your loss.
- An intense preoccupation with the life of the deceased.

These are all natural and normal grief responses. The grieving process helps you adjust your life to the loss of your loved one. It is important to cry and talk with people when you need to.

If you are concerned or worried about your reactions, or need to talk to someone, call our office. There is no charge. **Cascade Health Solutions Hospice, Bereavement Coordinator at 541-228-3050.**