

How Do You React When Someone You Love Dies?

When experiencing a loss, people often wonder if they are grieving in the proper way and if the feelings they are having are normal.

Many people experience one or more of the following:

- Tightness in the throat or heaviness in the chest
- An empty feeling in their stomach and loss of their appetite
- Feel guilty one minute and angry the next
- Feel restless and look for activity but find it difficult to concentrate
- Feel as though the loss isn't real; that it didn't actually happen
- Sense the loved one's presence, such as expecting the person to walk in the door at the usual time, hearing their voice or seeing their face
- Wander aimlessly, become forgetful and fail to finish things they've started
- Have difficulty sleeping or dream of their loved one frequently
- Assume some of the mannerisms or traits of their loved one
- Feel guilty or angry over things that happened or didn't happen in the relationship with the loved one
- Feel as though they need to take care of other people who seem uncomfortable around them by politely not talking about the feelings of loss
- Need to tell, retell and remember things about the loved one and the experience of their death
- Feel mood changes over the slightest things
- Cry unexpectedly

These are all natural and normal grief responses. It's important to talk with people and cry when you feel the need.

"For two years (after being widowed), I was just as crazy as you can be and still be at large. It was total confusion. How did I come out of it? I don't know, because I didn't know when I was in it that I was in it."
– Helen Hayes

Working Through Grief

There are a few important matters to consider during the grief process. The following are suggestions to consider, although they may or may not fit your situation.

- It may be difficult to ask for and accept help, but it's important to reach out to friends and family as you need them. Don't wait for them to guess your needs.
- Grief can produce self-neglect and stress. Your health is important. Regular rest and meals are essential. If you have distressing physical symptoms, see your doctor.
- Set aside time for your grief. Work can be helpful, but balance work with your own physical and social needs.
- Avoid hasty decisions. Consider your future calmly. Seek expert advice.

For more information about Hospice of Cincinnati's Bereavement Services, call (513) 891-7700.

"When a person is born, we rejoice, and when they're married, we jubilate, but when they die, we try to pretend nothing happened."
– Margaret Mead



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of Cincinnati*

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Bereavement Services at Hospice of Cincinnati

Bereavement Services are an important part of the Hospice of Cincinnati program. Regular contact is maintained for a year after the loss, to support family members.

Grief Support Group

The Grief Support Group program is available for adult family and friends of hospice patients. The program educates the bereaved about the grief process in a supportive environment.

The group meets once a week for six weeks and consists of presentations and discussions addressing issues such as stress management, feelings, self-esteem and role changes. Small group discussions allow each member to discuss his or her personal experiences and needs.

Grief Counseling

Hospice provides individual and family grief counseling on a short-term basis. These sessions help the bereaved identify feelings and focus on concerns through the grief process. The services also help link the person with appropriate resources in the community, including long-term counseling if needed.

Memorial Services

Hospice offers non-denominational memorial services in the fall and spring for families who have participated in the Hospice of Cincinnati program.

These services allow the family to remember their loved ones with music and readings presented by volunteers and staff. At these special services, family members are invited to light a candle in memory of their loved one.

Special Interest Seminars

Family members of hospice patients may have particular needs as they grieve. For this reason, Hospice of Cincinnati offers special interest seminars that address common issues for the bereaved.

During the holiday season, hospice offers a program on coping with the holidays while going through the grief process. The program explores issues such as the changing of roles and addresses practical tips such as stress management techniques. Other seminars are held regularly to meet various needs of the bereaved.

**For more information on Bereavement Services,
call (513) 891-7700.**

Fernside

Fernside, an affiliate of Hospice of Cincinnati, helps children and families after the death of a loved one. Fernside offers a variety of services including support groups, camps, phone consultations and grief literature and materials.

Our children's groups address themes at each meeting including: Telling Your Story, Changes & Rebuilding, Special Days and Memories. These themes guide the discussion and expressive arts that take place in the support groups. Expressive arts allow grieving children to express feelings that might be difficult to talk about.

Our adult groups provide a combination of grief support and psycho-educational information to help parents cope with their own feelings, better understand their grieving children, and work together as a family to integrate the loss into their lives.

**For more information about Fernside,
call 513-246-9140.**

Grief: What is it all about?

Grief is important. It is the process by which one begins to accept the reality of the loss and adjust to life without the deceased.

The loss of someone close causes stress and emotional discomfort, which can affect day-to-day living for the bereaved. Acknowledging this makes it easier to cope.

Grief is the emotional response to loss.

Working through grief can be a long and difficult process. It is not a process of forgetting the past, but rather a process of being able to accept the loss with less pain as time goes by.

Grief is highly individualized. Each person's response is different and unique. The time it takes a person to work through grief varies, as does the intensity of the emotions experienced. There are no time limits on the grief process.

